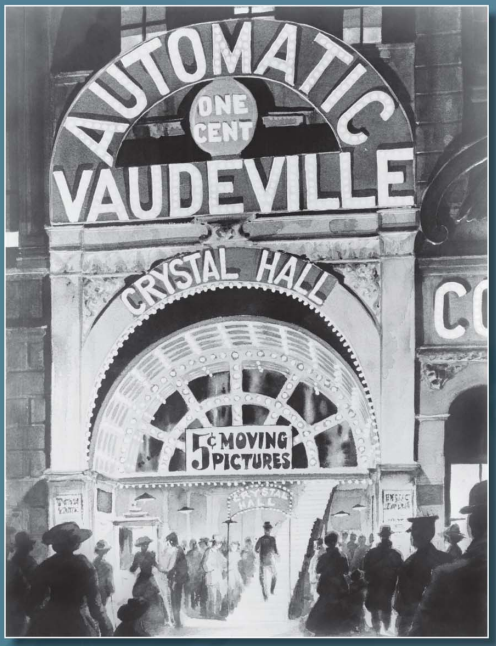
This International Student Edition is for use outside of the U.S.

Fifth Edition

FILM HISTORY

AN INTRODUCTION



KRISTIN THOMPSON
DAVID BORDWELL
JEFF SMITH

Mc Graw Hill

FILM HISTORY

An Introduction

Fifth Edition

Kristin Thompson
David Bordwell
Jeff Smith

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Mc Graw Hill

FILM HISTORY

Published by McGraw Hill LLC, 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10119. Copyright ©2022 by McGraw Hill LLC. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written consent of McGraw Hill LLC, including, but not limited to, in any network or other electronic storage or transmission, or broadcast for distance learning.

Some ancillaries, including electronic and print components, may not be available to customers outside the United States.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LWI 26 25 24 23 22 21

ISBN 978-1-265-92470-6
MHID 1-265-92470-8

Cover Image: *Crystal Hall: Everett Historical/Shutterstock; Film Reel: Tetra Images/Alamy Stock Photo*

All credits appearing on page or at the end of the book are considered to be an extension of the copyright page.

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw Hill LLC, and McGraw Hill LLC does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

mheducation.com/highered

To Gabrielle

Chez Léon tout est bon

CONTENTS

About the Authors xiii

Preface to the Fifth Edition xv

Part One EARLY CINEMA 1

1 THE INVENTION AND EARLY YEARS OF THE CINEMA, 1880s–1904 3

The Invention of the Cinema 4

Preconditions for Motion Pictures 4 / Major Precursors of Motion Pictures 5 / An International Process of Invention 6

Early Filmmaking and Exhibition 11

Scenics, Topicals, and Fiction Films 11 / Creating an Appealing Program 11 / The Growth of the French Film Industry 12 / England and the Brighton School 13

BOX: GEORGES MÉLIÈS, MAGICIAN OF THE CINEMA 14

The United States: Competition and the Resurgence of Edison 17

Reference 21

2 THE INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION OF THE CINEMA, 1905–1912 22

Film Production in Europe 22

France: Pathé versus Gaumont 22 / Italy: Growth through Spectacle 24 / Denmark: Nordisk and Ole Olsen 25 / Other Countries 26

The Struggle for the Expanding American Film Industry 26

The Nickelodeon Boom 26 / The Motion Picture Patents Company versus the Independents 27 / Social Pressures and Self-Censorship 29 / The Rise of the Feature Film 29 / The Star System 30 / The Movies Move to Hollywood 30

BOX: THE BEGINNINGS OF FILM ANIMATION 31

The Problem of Narrative Clarity 33

Early Moves toward Classical Storytelling 33

BOX: D. W. GRIFFITH AND ALBERT CAPELLANI: TWO EARLY MASTERS OF THE CINEMA 40

An International Style 42

References 43

3 NATIONAL CINEMAS, HOLLYWOOD CLASSICISM, AND WORLD WAR I, 1913–1919 44

The American Takeover of World Markets 45

The Rise of National Cinemas 46

Germany 46 / Italy 48 / Russia 48

BOX: THE BRIEF HEYDAY OF THE SERIAL 50

France 51 / Denmark 52 / Sweden 53

The Classical Hollywood Cinema 56

Mc Graw Hill Education
5011333

The Major Studios Begin to Form 56 / Controlling Filmmaking 57 / Filmmaking in Hollywood during the 1910s 58

BOX: PRECISION STAGING IN EUROPEAN CINEMA 60

Films and Filmmakers 61 / Streamlining American Animation 66

Trends in Smaller Producing Countries 67

References 68

Part Two THE LATE SILENT ERA, 1919–1929 69

4 FRANCE IN THE 1920s 71

The French Film Industry after World War I 71

Competition from Imports 71 / Disunity within the Film Industry 72 / Outdated Production Facilities 72

Major Postwar Genres and Filmmakers 73

The French Impressionist Movement 74

The Impressionists' Relation to the Industry 74

BOX: A CHRONOLOGY OF FRENCH IMPRESSIONIST CINEMA 75

Impressionist Theory 76 / Stylistic Traits of Impressionism 77

The End of French Impressionism 83

Problems within the Film Industry 84

References 84

5 GERMANY IN THE 1920s 85

The German Situation after World War I 85

Genres and Styles of German Postwar Cinema 86

Spectacles 86 / The German Expressionist Movement 87

BOX: A CHRONOLOGY OF GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST CINEMA 88

Kammerspiel 92 / German Films Abroad 93

Major Changes in the Mid-to-Late 1920s 94

The Technological Updating of the German Studios 94 / The End of Inflation 95

The End of the Expressionist Movement 96

New Objectivity 97

BOX: G. W. PABST AND NEW OBJECTIVITY 98

Export and Classical Style 99

References 100

6 SOVIET CINEMA IN THE 1920s 101

The Hardships of War Communism, 1918–1920 101

The Kuleshov Group 103

Recovery under the New Economic Policy, 1921–1924 104

Centralized Distribution 105 / Regularized Production 105

Increased State Control and the Montage Movement, 1925–1930 106

Growth and Export in the Film Industry 106 / The Influence of Constructivism 107 / A New Generation: The Montage Filmmakers 108

BOX: A CHRONOLOGY OF THE SOVIET MONTAGE MOVEMENT 110

The Theoretical Writings of Montage Filmmakers 111 / Soviet Montage Form and Style 111

Other Soviet Films 119

The First Five-Year Plan and the End of the Montage Movement 120

References 121

7 THE LATE SILENT ERA IN HOLLYWOOD, 1920–1928 122

Theater Chains and the Expansion of the Industry 123

Vertical Integration 123 / Picture Palaces 124 / The Big Three and the Little Five 124

The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America 125

Studio Filmmaking 125

Style and Technological Changes 125 / Big-Budget Films of the 1920s 128 / New Investment and Blockbusters 130 / Genres and Directors 131

BOX: 1920s COMEDY IN HOLLYWOOD 132

Foreign Filmmakers in Hollywood 136

Films for African American Audiences 140

The Animated Part of the Program 142

Reference 144

8 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS OF THE 1920s 145

"Film Europe" 145

Postwar Animosities Fade 145 / Concrete Steps toward Cooperation 146 / Success Cut Short 147

The "International Style" 147

The Blending of Stylistic Traits 147 / Carl Dreyer: European Director 149

BOX: THE SPREAD OF "ART CINEMA" INSTITUTIONS 151

Film Experiments outside the Mainstream Industry 151

Abstract Animation 152 / Dada Filmmaking 153 / Surrealism 155 / Cinéma Pur 156 / Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony 157 / Experimental Narrative 159

Documentary Features Gain Prominence 161

Commercial Filmmaking Internationally 162

Japan 162 / Great Britain 163 / Italy 164 / Some Smaller Producing Countries 164

References 166

Part Three THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND CINEMA, 1926–1945 167

9 THE INTRODUCTION OF SOUND 169

Sound in the United States 170

Warner Bros. and Vitaphone 170 / Sound-on-Film Is Adopted 170 / Sound and Filmmaking 171

BOX: EARLY SOUND TECHNOLOGY AND THE CLASSICAL STYLE 172

Germany Challenges Hollywood 175

Dividing the International Pie 175 / The Early Sound Era in Germany 175

The USSR Pursues its Own Path to Sound 178

The International Adoption of Sound 179

France 179 / Great Britain 181 / Japan 182 / Wiring the World's Theaters for Sound 183 / Crossing the Language Barrier 183

References 184

10 THE HOLLYWOOD STUDIO SYSTEM, 1930–1945 185

The New Structure of the Film Industry 186

The Big Five 186

BOX: THE HAYS CODE: SELF-CENSORSHIP IN HOLLYWOOD 188

The Little Three 188 / The Independents 190

Exhibition Practice in the 1930s 190

Continued Innovation in Hollywood 191

Sound Recording 191 / Camera Movement 192 / Technicolor 192 / Special Effects 193 / Cinematography Styles 195

Major Directors 196

The Silent Veterans 196 / New Directors 198

BOX: *CITIZEN KANE* AND *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS* 199

New Émigré Directors 200

Genre Innovations and Transformations 200

The Musical 200 / The Screwball Comedy 201 / The Horror Film 202 / The Social Problem Film 203 / The Gangster Film 204 / Film Noir 204 / The War Film 206

Animation and the Studio System 207

References 208

11 OTHER STUDIO SYSTEMS 209

Quota Quickies and Wartime Pressures: The British Studios **209**

The British Film Industry Grows 209 / Export Successes 211 / Alfred Hitchcock's Thrillers 212 / Crisis and Recovery 212 / The Effects of the War 214

Innovation within an Industry: The Studio System of Japan **216**

Popular Cinema of the 1930s 216 / The Pacific War 218

BOX: YASUJIRO OZU AND KENJI MIZOGUCHI IN THE 1930s 219

India: An Industry Built on Music **224**

A Highly Fragmented Business 224 / Mythologicals, Socials, and Devotionals 224 / Independents Weaken the System 225

China: Filmmaking Caught between Left and Right **225**

References 227

12 CINEMA AND THE STATE: THE USSR, GERMANY, AND ITALY, 1930–1945 228

The Soviet Union: Socialist Realism and World War II **228**

Films of the Early 1930s 229 / The Doctrine of Socialist Realism 229

BOX: SOCIALIST REALISM AND *CHAPAYEV* 230

The Main Genres of Socialist Realism 231 / The Soviet Cinema in Wartime 234

The German Cinema under the Nazis **236**

The Nazi Regime and the Film Industry 236 / Films of the Nazi Era 237 / The Aftermath of the Nazi Cinema 241

Italy: Propaganda versus Entertainment **241**

Industry Tendencies 241 / A Cinema of Distraction 242 / A New Realism? 244

References 246

13 FRANCE: POETIC REALISM, THE POPULAR FRONT, AND THE OCCUPATION, 1930–1945 247

The Industry and Filmmaking during the 1930s **248**

Production Problems and Artistic Freedom 248 / Fantasy and Surrealism: René Clair, Pierre Prévert, and Jean Vigo 248 / Quality Studio Filmmaking 250 / Émigrés in France 251 / Everyday Realism 251

Poetic Realism **252**

Doomed Lovers and Atmospheric Settings 253 / The Creative Burst of Jean Renoir 254 / Other Contributors 255

Brief Interlude: The Popular Front **256**

BOX: POPULAR FRONT FILMMAKING: *LA VIE EST À NOUS* AND *LA MARSEILLAISE* 257

Filmmaking in Occupied and Vichy France **260**

The Situation in the Film Industry 260 / Films of the Occupation Period 262

Reference 264

14 LEFTIST, DOCUMENTARY, AND EXPERIMENTAL CINEMAS, 1930–1945 265

The Spread of Political Cinema **265**

The United States 266 / Germany 267 / Belgium and the Netherlands 267 / Great Britain 268 / International Leftist Filmmaking in the Late 1930s 269

Government- and Corporate-Sponsored Documentaries **270**

The United States 270 / Great Britain 271

BOX: ROBERT FLAHERTY: *MAN OF ARAN* AND THE "ROMANTIC DOCUMENTARY" 272

Wartime Documentaries **274**

Hollywood Directors and the War 274 / Great Britain 275 Germany and the USSR 277

The International Experimental Cinema **277**

Experimental Narratives and Lyrical and Abstract Films 278 / Surrealism 279 / Animation 280

References 282

Part Four THE POSTWAR ERA: 1945–1960s 283

15 AMERICAN CINEMA IN THE POSTWAR ERA, 1945–1960 285

POSTWAR CHANGES, 1946–1948 **286**

The HUAC Hearings: The Cold War Reaches Hollywood 286 / The Paramount Decision 286

The Decline of the Hollywood Studio System **287**

Changing Lifestyles and Competing Entertainment 288

BOX: SEE IT ON THE BIG SCREEN 289

Hollywood Adjusts to Television 292 / Art Cinemas and Drive-Ins 293 / Challenges to Censorship 294

The New Power of the Individual Film and the Revival of the Roadshow **294**

The Rise of the Independents **295**

Mainstream Independents: Agents, Star Power, and the Package 295 / Exploitation 297 / Independents on the Fringe 297

Classical Hollywood Filmmaking: A Continuing Tradition **298**

Complexity and Realism in Storytelling 298 / Stylistic Changes 299 / New Twists on Old Genres 300

Major Directors: Several Generations **303**

Veterans of the Studio Era 303 / Émigrés Stay On 304 / Welles's Struggle with Hollywood 305 / The Impact of the Theater 305

BOX: ALFRED HITCHCOCK 306

New Directors 307

References 308

16 POSTWAR EUROPEAN CINEMA: NEOREALISM AND ITS CONTEXT, 1945–1959 309

The Postwar Context **309**

Film Industries and Film Culture **310**

West Germany: "Papas Kino" 310 / Resistance to US Encroachment 311 / Art Cinema: The Return of Modernism 313

Italy: Neorealism and After **315**

Italian Spring 315

BOX: NEOREALISM AND AFTER: A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS AND SELECTED WORKS 316

Defining Neorealism 318

BOX: *UMBERTO D.*: THE MAID WAKES UP 320

BOX: *OPEN CITY*: THE DEATH OF PINA 321

BOX: LUCHINO VISCONTI AND ROBERTO ROSSELLINI 322

Beyond Neorealism 322

A Spanish Neorealism? **325**

References 326

17 POSTWAR EUROPEAN CINEMA: FRANCE, SCANDINAVIA, AND BRITAIN, 1945–1959 327

French Cinema of the Postwar Decade **327**

The Industry Recovers 327

BOX: POSTWAR FRENCH FILM CULTURE 328

The Tradition of Quality 329 / The Return of Older Directors 331 / New Independent Directors 334

Scandinavian Revival **336**

BOX: CARL THEODOR DREYER 337

England: Quality and Comedy **338**

Problems in the Industry 339 / Literary Heritage and Eccentricity 339 / Art-House Success Abroad 342

References 342

18 POSTWAR CINEMA BEYOND THE WEST, 1945–1959 343

General Tendencies **343**

Japan **345**

Industry Recovery under the Occupation 345 / The Veteran Directors 346 / The War Generation 347

Postwar Cinema in the Soviet Sphere of Influence 348

The USSR: From High Stalinism to the Thaw 349 / Postwar Cinema in Eastern Europe 351

People's Republic of China 355

Civil War and Revolution 355 / Mixing Maoism and Tradition 357

India 358

A Disorganized but Prolific Industry 358 / The Populist Tradition and Raj Kapoor 359

BOX: MUSIC AND POSTWAR INDIAN FILM 360

Swimming against the Stream: Guru Dutt and Ritwik Ghatak 361

Latin America 362

Brazil and Argentina 362 / Mexican Popular Cinema 363

References 364

19 ART CINEMA AND THE IDEA OF AUTHORSHIP 365

The Rise And Spread Of The Auteur Theory 365

Authorship and the Growth of the Art Cinema 366

Luis Buñuel (1900–1983) 367

Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007) 368

Akira Kurosawa (1910–1998) 371

Federico Fellini (1920–1993) 374

Michelangelo Antonioni (1912–2007) 375

Robert Bresson (1907–1999) 377

Jacques Tati (1908–1982) 379

Satyajit Ray (1921–1992) 381

References 384

20 NEW WAVES AND YOUNG CINEMAS, 1958–1967 385

The Industries' New Needs 385

Formal and Stylistic Trends 386

France: New Wave and New Cinema 389

The New Wave 389

BOX: FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT AND JEAN-LUC GODARD 391

New Cinema: The Left Bank 393

Italy: Young Cinema and Spaghetti Westerns 396

Great Britain: Kitchen Sink Cinema 398

Young German Film 401

New Cinema in the USSR and Eastern Europe 402

Young Cinema in the Soviet Union 402 / New Waves in Eastern Europe 404

BOX: MIKLÓS JANCSÓ 409

The Japanese New Wave 412

An Industry in Search of Youth 412 / Oshima and Others 413

Brazil: Cinema Nôvo 415

Government Support and New Directors 416 / Coups and the Cinema 417 / Tropicalism and Cannibalism 418

References 419

21 DOCUMENTARY AND EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA IN THE POSTWAR ERA, 1945–MID-1960s 420

Toward the Personal Documentary 421

Innovative Trends 421 / The National Film Board and Free Cinema 423 / France: The Auteurs' Documentaries 423 / Jean Rouch and Ethnographic Documentary 425

Direct Cinema 426

The United States: Drew and Associates 426

BOX: NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR THE NEW DOCUMENTARY 427

Direct Cinema in Bilingual Canada 428 / France: Cinéma Vérité and Provocation 429

Experimental and Avant-Garde Cinema 432

BOX: THE FIRST POSTWAR DECADE: MAYA DEREN 433

Abstraction, Collage, and Personal Expression 435 / Success and New Ambitions 441

BOX: THE SECOND POSTWAR DECADE: STAN BRAKHAGE 442

Underground and Expanded Cinema 444

References 449

Part Five THE CONTEMPORARY CINEMA SINCE THE 1960s 450

22 HOLLYWOOD'S FALL AND RISE: 1960–1980 452

The 1960s: The Film Industry in Recession **453**

The Studios in Crisis 453 / Styles and Genres 454 / Modifying the Classical Studio Style 455 / Identifying the Audience 456

BOX: NEW PRODUCTION AND EXHIBITION TECHNOLOGIES 457

The New Hollywood: Late 1960s to Late 1970s **458**

Toward an American Art Cinema 458 / Hollywood Strikes Gold 460

BOX: PERSONAL CINEMA: ALTMAN AND ALLEN 461

The Return of the Blockbuster 463

BOX: THE 1970s BIG THREE: COPPOLA, SPIELBERG, AND LUCAS 464

Hollywood Updated 467 / Scorsese as Synthesis 469

Opportunities for Independents **470**

References 473

23 POLITICALLY CRITICAL CINEMA OF THE 1960s AND 1970s 474

Political Filmmaking in the Third World **475**

Revolutionary Aspirations 476 / Political Genres and Style 476 / Latin America 477

BOX: TWO REVOLUTIONARY FILMS: *MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT* AND *LUCÍA* 480

Black African Cinema 486 / China: Cinema and the Cultural Revolution 488

Political Filmmaking in the First and Second Worlds **490**

Eastern Europe and the USSR 490 / Political Cinema in the West: A Culture of Dissent 493

BOX: FILM ACTIVITIES DURING THE MAY EVENTS IN PARIS 494

BOX: BRECHT AND POLITICAL MODERNISM 498

References 510

24 DOCUMENTARY AND EXPERIMENTAL FILM SINCE THE LATE 1960s 512

Documentary Cinema **513**

Direct Cinema and Its Legacy 513

BOX: FREDERICK WISEMAN AND THE TRADITION OF DIRECT CINEMA 514

Synthesizing Documentary Techniques 516 / Questioning Documentary Actuality 518 / Documenting Upheavals and Injustice 520 / Theatrical Documentary in the Age of Video and the Internet 522

BOX: FACTS, TRUTH, AND ATTITUDE: MICHAEL MOORE AND ERROL MORRIS 523

Structural Film and After **526**

Structural Film 526 / Reactions to Structural Film: The Return of Narrative 531 / New Mergers 537

BOX: CUTTING THE TIE TO PHOTOGRAPHY: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY 538

Film, Video, and Entry into the Museum 540

References 542

25 NEW CINEMAS AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS: EUROPE AND THE USSR SINCE THE 1970s 544

Western Europe **545**

Crisis in the Industry 545

BOX: TELEVISION AND AARDMAN ANIMATIONS 547

National Traditions and International Trends 548

BOX: DURAS, VON TROTTA, AND THE EUROPEAN ART CINEMA 558

The Arresting Image 560

BOX: ART CINEMA: SLOWING DOWN AND JUMPING AROUND 564

Eastern Europe and the USSR 566

Eastern Europe: From Reform to Revolution 566

BOX: ROMANIA: A NEWER WAVE 571

From the USSR to the CIS 572

References 578

26 A DEVELOPING WORLD: CONTINENTAL AND SUBCONTINENTAL CINEMAS SINCE 1970 579

New Cinemas, New Audiences 580

African Cinema 580

North Africa 581 / Sub-Saharan Africa 582 / The 1990s and Beyond 583

Filmmaking in the Middle East 586

Israel and Palestine 586 / Egypt 587 / Turkey 588 / Iran: Revolution, Renaissance, and Retreat 589 / Countries in Conflict 592

South America and Mexico: Interrupted Reforms and Partnerships with Hollywood 593

Brazil 593

BOX: LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CINEMA 594

Argentina 596 / Chile and Elsewhere 597 / Mexico 598 / Cuba, Industry in Isolation 601

India: Mass Output and Art Cinema 602

Alternatives to the Mainstream 603 / Coproductions and Satellite TV 604 / Popular Cinema Changes with the Times 605 / Indian Cinema on the Global Stage 607

References 608

27 CINEMA RISING: PACIFIC ASIA AND OCEANIA SINCE 1970 609

Australia and New Zealand 610

Australia 610 / New Zealand 613

New Cinemas in East Asia 614

Thailand 615 / The Philippines 616 / Taiwan 617

BOX: EDWARD YANG AND HOU HSIAO-HSIEN 619

Japan 621

Independent Filmmaking: Two Generations 621

BOX: THE POPULAR ARTISTRY OF HAYAO MIYAZAKI 625

Hong Kong 626

South Korea 631

China: The Great Success Story 634

Economic Reforms and the Fifth Generation 634 / The Sixth Generation and Illegal Films 636 / The Cinema and "Market Socialism" 637 / The Dragon Grows Stronger 638

References 641

Part Six CINEMA IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA 642

28 AMERICAN CINEMA AND THE ENTERTAINMENT ECONOMY: THE 1980s AND AFTER 643

Hollywood, Cable Television, and Home Video 644

Movies in the Home 644

Concentration and Consolidation in the Film Industry 645

The Majors Stay Major 645 / The Blockbuster Mentality 647

BOX: DISNEY WORLD GETS BIGGER 650

The Bottom Line 652 / Multiplexing and Megaplexing: The New Face of Exhibition 654

Artistic Trends 655

Genres 655 / Narrative Form and Style 658

BOX: INTENSIFIED CONTINUITY: A STYLE FOR THE VIDEO AGE 660

Directors: Midrange Options and Blockbuster Obligations 662

A New Age of Independent Cinema 667

Indie Aesthetics 668

BOX: INDIE AUTEURS: LOW-BUDGET BRANDING 669

Indies and the Industry 673

References 677

29 TOWARD A GLOBAL FILM CULTURE 679

Hollyworld? 680

The Media Conglomerates 681 / Cooperation and Cooptation 681

BOX: *JURASSIC PARK*, GLOBAL FILM 682

Multiplexing the Planet 683

Regional Alliances, Media Empires, and the New International Film 684

Europe and Asia Try to Compete 684 / Media Empires, West and East 684 / Global Films from Outside Hollywood? 686

BOX: BACK TO BASICS: DOGME 95 687

Diasporic Cinema 689

The Festival Circuit 690

Festivals and the Global Film Business 691

Video Piracy: An Alternative Distribution System 692

Fan Subcultures: Appropriating the Movies 693

References 696

30 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE CINEMA 697

Digital Tools: Piece by Piece 698

Preproduction 698 / Postproduction 699 / Shooting in Digital: Experiments on the Margins 700 / Digital Tools for 35 mm Shooting 701 / Publicity and Marketing 702

Digital Convergence: Putting the Pieces together 703

The Digital Cinema Initiative 703 / Theaters Go Digital 703 / Promoting Digital Production: Early Adopters and Film Diehards 704 / Effects on Film Form and Style 705

BOX: DIGITAL ANIMATION: BORDERLINE BECOMES MAINSTREAM 706

Digital Distribution 709

BOX: DIRECTING DIGITAL: DAVID FINCHER AND JEAN-LUC GODARD 710

Digital Distribution to Theaters 712 / DVD: Sales and Rental 712 / Online Distribution: Downloads and Streaming 712 / Streaming: The Long Tail Wags the Dog 713

New Media and the Future of Film 717

Video Games 717 / Virtual and Augmented Reality 718

References 720

Glossary 722

Index 728

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell are married and live in Madison, Wisconsin.

Kristin Thompson is an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where she earned her Ph.D. Her books include *Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible* (1981), *Exporting Entertainment: America's Place in World Film Markets 1901–1934* (1985), *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis* (1988), *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique* (1999), *Herr Lubitsch Goes to Hollywood: German and American Film after World War I* (2005), and *The Frodo Franchise: The Lord of the Rings and Modern Hollywood* (2007).

David Bordwell is Jacques Ledoux Professor Emeritus of Film Studies in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He also holds a Hilldale Professorship in the Humanities and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Copenhagen. He has also held the Kluge Chair in Modern Culture at the Library of Congress. His books include *Narration in the Fiction Film* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), *On the History of Film Style* (Harvard University Press, 1997), *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (Harvard University Press, 2000; 2nd ed., Irvington Way Institute Press, 2011), *Figures Traced in Light*: *On Cinematic Staging* (University of California Press, 2005), *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies* (University of California Press, 2006), *The Rhapsodes: How 1940s Critics Changed American Film Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), and *Reinventing Hollywood: How 1940s Filmmakers Changed Movie Storytelling* (University of Chicago Press, 2017). He has also written books on Carl Theodor Dreyer, Yasujiro Ozu, Sergei Eisenstein, digital cinema, and Hong Kong film.

Jeff Smith is a Professor of Film Studies in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he earned his Ph.D. He is the author of two books: *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (1998) and *Film Criticism, the Cold War, and the Blacklist: Reading the Hollywood Reds* (2014). He has also published several articles and book chapters on the role of sound and music in American cinema. He is currently at work on a book that traces development of the classical Hollywood film score during the 1930s that examines how studios allocated musical resources to films based on their position within the hierarchy of prestige pictures, programmers, and "B" films.

The authors have previously collaborated on *Film Art: An Introduction* (McGraw-Hill, 11th ed., 2017). Bordwell and Thompson are coauthors of *Minding Movies: Observations on the Art, Craft, and Business of Filmmaking* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), *Christopher Nolan: A Labyrinth of Linkages* (Irvington Way Institute Press, 2013), and, with Janet Staiger, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (Columbia University Press, 1985).

All three authors have been active in digital media culture. Thompson has contributed supplements for Criterion DVD/Blu-ray releases of *The Only Son/There Was a Father*, *A Man Escaped*, and *Cluny Brown*, as well as a booklet essay for the Kino Lorber Blu-ray release of the restored *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*. Also for Criterion discs, Bordwell has provided DVD notes and commentary for *Alexander Nevsky*, *An Autumn Afternoon*, *Notorious*, *His Girl Friday*, *The Flavor of Green Tea over Rice*, and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Smith has done supplements focusing on music for three other Criterion discs: *Shoot the Piano Player*, *Odd Man Out*, and *Now Voyager*.

All three authors host an ongoing series, "Observations on Film Art," for the Criterion Channel streaming service. The many entries offer video essays on films from all eras, including *The Phantom Carriage*, *L'Avventura*, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, *My Brilliant Career*, *Girl Shy*, *Vampyr*, *Hiroshima mon amour*, *Shock Corridor*, *Vagabond*, *The Long Day Closes*, *Chungking Express*, and many other classics. The service is available by subscription at https://www.criterionchannel.com.

For their weblog and other online information, visit www.davidbordwell.net.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

Around the world, at any instant, millions of people are watching movies. They watch mainstream entertainment, serious "art films," documentaries, cartoons, experimental films, educational shorts. They sit in air-conditioned theaters, in village squares, in art museums, in college classrooms, in their homes before a television screen, in coffee shops before a computer monitor or cellphone screen. Through the 2010s, the world's movie theaters sold about 8 billion tickets each year. With the availability of films on video—whether broadcast, fed from cable or satellites or the Internet, or played from disc or digital file—the audience has multiplied far beyond that. In 2019, the combined global market for theatrical, home, and mobile entertainment exceeded $100 billion for the first time.

Nobody needs to be convinced that film has been one of the most influential media of the past hundred years. Not only can you recall your most exciting or tearful moments at the movies, you can also probably remember moments in ordinary life when you tried to be as graceful, as selfless, as tough, or as compassionate as those larger-than-life figures on the screen. The way we dress and cut our hair, the way we talk and act, the things we believe or doubt—all these aspects of our lives are shaped by films. Films also provide us with powerful artistic experiences, insights into diverse cultures, and new ways of thinking.

In this book, we introduce the history of film as it is presently conceived, written, and taught by its most accomplished scholars. *Film History: An Introduction* is not, however, a distillation of everything that is known about film history. Researchers are fond of saying that there is no film *history*, only film *histories*. This partly means that there can be no single survey that puts all known facts into place. The history of avant-garde film does not match neatly up with the history of color technology or the development of the Western or the life of Alfred Hitchcock. For this reason, the enterprise we call "writing film history" is a big tent housing people who work from various perspectives and with different interests and purposes.

So there is no Big Story of Film History that will list, describe, and explain everything that took place. We think that writing film history involves asking a series of *questions* and searching for *evidence* in order to answer them in the course of an *argument*. When historians focus on different questions, they select different evidence and formulate different explanations. For example, the historian who wants to know how European cinema developed in the Cold War will not pay much attention to why Marilyn Monroe had career problems near the end of her life. For this reason, historians create not a single, infinitely extended history but a diverse set of specific historical arguments.

Three Questions

In writing this book, we have focused on the following three key questions.

1. *How have uses of the film medium changed or become normalized over time?* Within "uses of the medium," we include matters of film form: the overall organization of the film. Often this involves telling a story, but a film's overall form might also be based on an argument or an abstract pattern. "Uses of the medium" also include matters of film style, the patterned uses of film techniques: mise-en-scène (staging, lighting, setting, and costume); camerawork; editing; and sound. In addition, any balanced conception of how the medium has been used must also consider film modes (documentary, avant-garde, animation) and genres (such as Westerns, thrillers, musicals). So, we also examine these phenomena. All such matters are central to most college courses in film history.

A major purpose of *Film History: An Introduction* is to survey the uses of the medium in different times and places. Sometimes we dwell on the creation of stable norms of form and style, as when we examine how Hollywood standardized certain editing options in the first two decades of filmmaking. At other times, we examine how filmmakers have proposed innovations in form, technique, and genre.

2. *How have the conditions of the film industry—production, distribution, and exhibition—affected the uses of the medium?* Films are made within *modes of production*, habitual ways of organizing the labor and materials involved in creating a movie. Some modes of production are industrial. In these circumstances, companies make films as a business. The classic instance of industrial production is the *studio system*, in which firms are organized in order to make films for large audiences through a fairly detailed division of labor. Another sort of industrial production might be called the *artisanal*, or *one-off*, approach, in which a production company makes one film at a time. Other modes of production are less highly organized, involving small groups or individuals who make films for specific purposes. In any event, the ways in which films are made have had particular effects on the look and sound of the finished products.

So have the ways in which films are distributed and consumed. For example, the major technological innovations associated with the early 1950s—widescreen picture, stereophonic sound, increased use of color—were actually available decades earlier. Each could have been developed before the 1950s, but the US film industry had no pressing need to do so. Theater attendance was so high that spending money on new attractions would not have significantly increased profits. Only when attendance dropped in the late 1940s did producers and exhibitors feel compelled to introduce new technologies to lure audiences back into theaters. Exhibition in turn changed film styles and genres, with new approaches to staging and a trend toward more spectacle.

3. *How have international trends emerged in the uses of the film medium and in the film market?* In this book, we try to balance the consideration of important national contributions with a sense of how international and cross-cultural influences were operating. Many nations' audiences and film industries have been influenced by creators and films migrating across borders. Genres are vagabond as well. The Hollywood Western influenced the Japanese swordplay film and the Italian Western, genres that in turn influenced the Hong Kong kung-fu films of the 1970s; Hollywood films then began incorporating elements of the martial arts movie.

Just as important, the film industry itself is significantly transnational. At certain periods, circumstances closed off countries from the flow of films, but in general there has always been a global film market, and we understand it best by tracing trends across cultures and regions. We have paid particular attention to conditions that allowed people to see films made outside their own country.

Each of these *how* questions accompanies a great many *why* questions. For any event in the processes we focus on, we can ask what conditions caused it to turn out the way it did. Why, for instance, did early Soviet filmmakers undertake their explorations of disturbing, aggressive narrative? Why did Hollywood's studio system begin to fragment in the late 1940s? Why are more films produced now with international investment than in the 1930s or 1940s? Historians are keen to investigate causes and effects, as you will see in this text.

If film history is a generative, self-renewing activity, then we cannot simply offer a condensation of "all previous knowledge." We are, in a sense, casting what we find into a new form. Throughout the thirty years spent researching and writing and rewriting this book, we have come to believe that it offers a unique version of the shape of film history, both its overall contour and its specific detail.

Answering the Questions: Our Approach

We divide film history into five large periods: early cinema (to about 1919), the late silent era (1919–1929), the development of sound cinema (1926–1945), the period after World War II (1946–1960s), and the contemporary cinema (1960s to the present). These divisions are fairly conventional, and they have the advantage of capturing important developments in the areas that our questions address—form and style, the film industry, and international trends.

But our book differs significantly from most other surveys. For one thing, it is very comprehensive. Some books restrict themselves to the most famous films. This probably made sense in an era when access to films was more restricted. Today, however, people can obtain DVDs or stream files from all over the world, and our sense of film history has expanded enormously. As the field of film studies has grown, small countries and little-known films are now objects of intense research. A textbook should reflect our new vision of world cinema and introduce readers to great films that have been rediscovered.

For similar reasons, we have not confined ourselves just to live-action fiction films. Documentary and experimental cinema are important in their own right, as vehicles for innovations in form and style. In this text, we consider these modes from the earliest efforts to the recent work of

William Greaves, Wang Bing, Phil Solomon, and Christian Marclay.

Organization and Distinctive Features

Film History: An Introduction is comprehensive in another way. Most textbooks are organized as a chronological string of national cinema chapters. Each major producing country typically gets a single chapter summarizing its accomplishments across many years. Sometimes we also take this tack, usually when a country's contribution to a period is very significant. But a unique feature of our book is the way we try to relate developments in one nation to parallel developments elsewhere.

Why is this important? Cinema began as an international art, and for most of its history, it has functioned that way. Filmmakers in one country are often well aware of what their counterparts elsewhere are doing. And several national film industries are often responding to the same conditions at the same time. For example, during the 1930s, many countries were working to meet the challenge of making sound films. Today, filmmakers face shared problems of global distribution and digital convergence. To trace each country's cinematic history in isolation would miss the common features at work in a particular period.

As a result, most of our chapters compare developments across different national film traditions. Instead of devoting a single chapter to the French cinema of the 1960s, Chapter 20 situates the French New Wave within the emergence of New Waves and Young Cinemas around the world. Similarly, instead of treating major directors of the 1950s and 1960s such as Fellini and Bergman solely as individuals, Chapter 19 explains that they rose to prominence thanks to an international film culture driven by festivals, magazines, and a new idea of the filmmaker as a creative artist. Most chapters of our book use this comparative approach because it helps answer our general question of how cinema has developed as an international art. By presenting broad patterns rather than isolated facts, the strategy also helps the reader make new connections.

A concern for this broader view informs another unique feature of our book. Filmmaking and the film industry operate within a broad social, economic, and political context. We cannot fill in all the details of that context, of course, but most chapters do point out this wider frame of reference. For example, the development of Soviet cinema, in both the silent period (Chapter 6) and the sound era (Chapters 9 and 18), cannot be understood outside the political imperatives at work in the USSR. Less obviously, the rebuilding of European cinema after World War II owes an enormous amount to the Marshall Plan, a new emphasis on central planning and regional cooperation, and shifts in the world economy (Chapter 17). Our need to situate film history within broader trends is just as pressing in recent eras. What we call the "critical political cinema" of the 1960s (Chapter 23) developed in response to postcolonialism, the rise of a new generation, America's involvement in the Vietnamese civil war, and other wide-ranging conditions. Likewise, economic and cultural factors are at the center of our discussion of globalization (Chapter 29). Our treatment of digital convergence in Chapter 30 considers overarching technological changes from the 1990s into the 2010s.

Film History: An Introduction relies on another unusual feature. For illustrations, many textbooks are content to use photos that were taken on the set while the film is being shot. These production stills are often posed and give no flavor of what the film actually looks like. Instead, nearly all of our illustrations are taken from the films themselves. Collecting frame enlargements has obliged us to pursue elusive prints in film archives around the world, but the results are worth it because we are able to study exactly what viewers see on the screen. Thanks to these images, we can enrich our historical argument and focus on a short sequence of images that is typical or innovative, as when we study 1910s techniques of precision staging versus continuity editing (Chapter 3), cutting patterns in Soviet montage cinema (Chapter 6), and typical Neorealist sequences in *Umberto D.* and *Open City* (Chapter 16). These moment-by-moment analyses bring important films alive for readers, who can step through video versions frame by frame.

Yet another distinctive feature of our text is that it rests on fifty years of our research. Putting aside our two textbooks, we have published several books on cinema, many of them devoted to film history. *Film History: An Introduction* is deeply indebted to the work of many other scholars, but to a considerable extent it reflects the breadth and depth of our original research into silent film, the history of US, European, and Asian cinema, and contemporary film trends across the world. We have done research in many of the world's major film archives. We have written books on films and filmmakers from Germany, Russia, Japan, France, Denmark, China, and the United States. One of us has written a book on the historiography of film. *Film History: An Introduction* is the fruit of decades of watching films, studying them, and thinking about their relations to other arts, to culture, and to the larger world.

Changes in the New Edition

As film history develops, we not only confront new films and filmmakers, but we often reconsider the past. In most chapters, we have corrected errors and added material reflecting recent research. Some of these small changes

reflect new perspectives on innovations related to film sound, early cinema, documentary film practice, and cycles of exploitation cinema.

The major revisions in this fifth edition reflect our rethinking of post-1970 film history. Most of the changes introduce fresh information and ideas. Chapter 22 updates the box on Francis Coppola, Steven Spielberg, and George Lucas to reevaluate their later business ventures. It also includes new material on Martin Scorsese. We show how a new generation of directors cite his work in much the same way that Scorsese himself paid homage to his predecessors. Similarly Chapter 24 on documentary and experimental film updates our coverage of the surging demand for nonfiction films released outside the mainstream theatrical market.

The biggest changes have been made to the last five chapters. These chapters reflect the fact that cinema continues to grow as a worldwide medium. Although American movies are the best known, other countries are becoming global players. The most obvious emerging industries are in India and China, but other countries are also finding (or refinding) their voices. In Chapter 25, we consider the continued legacy of art cinema modernism through brief discussions of Berlin school directors Thomas Arslan, Angela Schanelac, Christian Petzold, and of Greek filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos. Chapter 26, which focuses on continental and subcontinental cinemas, spotlights rising talents from Africa, Egypt, Iran, Argentina, and Mexico.

Chapter 27, "Cinema Rising: Pacific Asia and Oceania Since 1970," shifts to another epicenter of change. In the new millennium, two regional powers have ascended, South Korea, replacing Hong Kong as a source of major genre and arthouse films; and mainland China, whose explosive economic expansion fueled the fastest growing film industry in postwar history. Since our previous edition, South Korea has solidified its place, largely on the strength of new work by Hong Sang-soo, Lee Chang-dong, and Bong Joon-ho. Bong's *Parasite* (2019) garnered acclaim as no Korean film before it had, winning the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or and the Oscar for Best Picture. China, meanwhile, consolidated its position as one of the world's most important film markets. The chapter highlights the continued importance of Chinese blockbusters made both domestically and as coproductions. It also examines new films produced in the independent sector by directors Bi Gan and Hu Bo.

Where does American cinema fit into all this? Part Six, "Cinema in the Age of New Media," opens with a consideration of this problem. Chapter 28 discusses how Hollywood adjusted to new forms of entertainment—notably cable television and home video. We also consider Hollywood's continued emphasis on blockbusters and franchises. A box devoted to Disney shows its supremacy in those domains. With its acquisition of 20th Century Fox and a new streaming service, Disney reinforced its status as Hollywood's most powerful studio. The chapter also revises its take on the industry's search for synergy, focusing on the most recent round of mergers and acquisitions. Finally, throughout the chapter, we address the increased visibility of minority and women filmmakers.

The book ends with two wide-ranging surveys of the contemporary film landscape. Chapter 29, "Toward a Global Film Culture," examines the effects of globalization on contemporary cinema. We offer fresh information and ideas about Hollywood's domination, regional responses to it, cinemas of the diaspora, film festivals, and piracy. We also expanded our coverage of fan subcultures. Here we not only underscore the myriad ways filmmakers provide fan service, but also how fans sometimes function as a source of friction, either through their criticism on social media or their creation of unofficial versions of studio classics.

The final chapter, Chapter 30, "Digital Technology and the Cinema," explores the degree to which digital technology has almost completely taken over film production, distribution, and exhibition. We trace this process in many domains, from computer animation to 3D projection, from production methods to mobile distribution and Virtual Reality. We've also updated our coverage of America's major tech companies (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google). With the exception of Facebook, all of these companies have established streaming services, emerging as significant competitors to Hollywood's existing oligopoly. More importantly, by producing their own content, these tech companies effectively revamped the classic strategy of vertical integration to fit the era of digital convergence. We hope that our readers will recognize the current media landscape in the story we tell here.

Throughout the fifth edition, we've also tried to address the coronavirus pandemic's manifold effects on cinema. Obviously, this is a daunting task, as the situation in every country in the world has proven to be fluid. Yet, as COVID-19 cases proliferated, film production ceased, theaters closed, and release schedules were shuffled in the hopes that the industry's normal business operations would eventually resume. The short-term impacts of the pandemic were devastating. Yet, even as theaters gradually reopen and film production restarts, the pandemic casts a huge shadow over cinema's future. None of us have a crystal ball, and it would be rash to suggest that cinema won't continue in some form or other. But the calamity caused by COVID-19 outbreak seems likely to wreak havoc on the world's film industries for years to come.

We trust that teachers and students will go beyond what the book offers and explore film history on their own. To this end, we offer many supplements that try to tease you into byways we could not pursue in an already wide-ranging text.

New to the fifth edition is a collection of one hundred video clips that bring the text and images on the printed page to life. The clips present entire sequences, typically running from five to eight minutes. They cover the entire history of world cinema with most chapters featuring three to four video examples. The extracts survey a broad spectrum of cinematic modes, styles, genres, movements, and traditions. We also spotlight the work of comparatively new voices, such as Lucrecia Martel, Greta Gerwig, and Sean Baker, alongside directors well established within the canon.

Next, we have prepared a broad background essay, "Doing Film History," which is available online at www.davidbordwell.net. A version of this served as an introductory chapter in earlier editions of this book, and in order to expand the essay's availability, we have moved it online. In addition, many of the bonus materials that appeared in earlier editions can be found in the Student Resources section at the end of the eBook. There you will find bibliographies keyed to each chapter as well as a bibliography for more general topics.

Just as important are the "Notes and Queries" sections we had appended to chapters in earlier editions. Now those and new ones reside in the Student Resources section at the end of the eBook. We urge both teachers and students to consult them. The Notes and Queries discuss general issues of historical research as well as topics we find intriguing. (How did Japanese anime become so popular in the United States? Why do some Italian critics think that Neorealism never existed?) The advantage of moving the Notes and Queries online is that we can update them and add others as the need arises.

Finally, we invite everyone to visit our blog, *Observations on Film Art*, at www.davidbordwell.net/blog, which often considers historical topics relevant to the questions, evidence, and explanations we present in this book.

Acknowledgments

One thing has remained constant from earlier editions: our gratitude to other scholars. Their research helped us rethink the history of the art form we love, and we look forward to learning more from them. Specifically, many individuals have helped us on this project.

First among equals are the archivists. We thank Elaine Burrows, Jackie Morris, Julie Rigg, and the staff of the National Film and Television Archive of the British Film Institute; Paul Spehr, the late Kathy Loughney, Patrick Loughney, Cooper Graham, Mike Mashon, Greg Lukow, Karen Fishman, Alan Gevinson, Dorinda Hartmann, Josie Walters-Johnston, Zoran Sinobad, and Rosemary Hanes of the Motion Picture, Television, and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress; Enno Patalas, Jan Christopher-Horak, Stefan Drössler, Klaus Volkmer, Gerhardt Ullmann, and the staff of the München Filmmuseum; Mark-Paul Meyer, Eric de Kuyper, and the staff of the Nederlands Filmmuseum; Eileen Bowser, Charles Silver, Mary Corliss, and the staff of the Film Study Center of the Museum of Modern Art; Ib Monty, Marguerite Engberg, Dan Nissen, Thomas Christensen, and the staff of the Danish Film Museum; Vincent Pinel and the staff of the Cinémathèque Française of Paris; Michael Pogorzelski and Joe Lindner of the Archive of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; Schawn Belston, Vice President for Asset Management at 20th Century Fox; Robert Rosen, Eddie Richmond, and the staff of the UCLA Film Archive; Bruce Jenkins and Mike Maggiore, of the Walker Art Center Film Department; Robert A. Haller, Carol Pipolo, and the staff of Anthology Film Archives; and Edith Kramer and the staff of the Pacific Film Archive. We owe special thanks to Jan-Christopher Horak and Paolo Cherchai Usai, who, during their curatorships of the Motion Picture Division of George Eastman House, assisted our work beyond the call of duty.

This book would not have been possible without the generosity of the late Jacques Ledoux and his successors Gabrielle Claes and Nicola Mazzanti. Along with their staff at the Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique, they kindly supported our work in innumerable ways.

For all five editions of *Film History: An Introduction*, we have been lucky to find a great many people who have shared information, provided us access to films, and offered critical suggestions: Muriel Andrin, Jacques Aumont, Sally Banes, John Belton, Joe Beres, Vince Bohlinger, Edward Branigan, Anke Brouwers, Carlos Bustamente, Michael Campi, Mary Carbine, Jerry Carlson, Noël Carroll, Matt Connolly, Don Crafton, Chen Mei, Robert Chen, Thomas Christensen, Brandon Colvin, Darrell Davis, David Desser, Eric Dienstfrey, Michael Drozewski, Chaz Ebert, Roger Ebert, Alan Franey, Michael Friend, Geoff Gardner, André Gaudreault, Stuart Greif, Tom Gunning, Kevin Heffernan, Richard Hincha, Kyoko Hirano, Ivy Ho, Donald Kirihara, Hiroshi Komatsu, Jonathan Kuntz, Albert Lee, Jared Lewis, Li Cheuk-to, Richard Maltby, Mark Minett, Albert Moran, Charles Musser, Dominique Nasta, Richard Neupert, Dan Nissen, Jenny Oyallon-Koloski, Peter Parshall, William Paul, Tom Paulus, Richard Peña, Mark Peranson, Guilherme De Alencar Pinto, Neil Rattigan, Tony Rayns, Donald Richie, David

Rodowick, Maureen Rogers, Phil Rosen, Barbara Scharres, Brad Schauer, Alex Sesonske, Shu Kei, Scott Simmon, Alissa Simon, Matt St. John, Laurie Stark, Cecille Starr, Nora Stone, Stephen Teo, Peter Tsi, Yuri Tsivian, Athena Tsui, Casper Tybjerg, Alan Upchurch, Ruth Vasey, Noel Vera, Diane Verma, Kewal Verma, Marc Vernet, Booth Wilson, Chuck Wolfe, Wong Ailing, Jacob Wong, Yeh Yueh-yu, and PoChu Au Yeung. We're especially grateful to Ivo Blom, Patrick Hogan, Armin Jäger, Lalita Pandit, and John Powers for their suggestions. For assistance with illustrations, we are particularly grateful to Michael Barker of Sony Pictures Classics, James Schamus of Symbolic Exchange, and Haden Guest of the Harvard Film Archive, as well as Sharon Lockhart and Anthony McCall. Peter Becker and Kim Hendrickson of Criterion have assisted our work in many ways as well. David Hancock and his colleagues at IHS Markit provided precious statistics on the international film industry.

Our coverage of silent cinema was enhanced by the annual "Giornate del cinema muto" events at Pordenone, Italy. These gatherings have revolutionized the study of silent cinema, and we are grateful to Davide Turconi, Lorenzo Codelli, Paolo Cherchi Usai, David Robinson, and their associates for inviting us to participate in them. In similar fashion, "Il cinema ritrovato" in Bologna has expanded our knowledge of film history, and we thank Gian Luca Farinelli, Guy Borlée, the late Peter von Bagh, and Patrizia Mighetti for inviting us to this annual gathering.

We are also grateful to our readers in the discipline, who provided helpful criticism and suggestions: Maria Isabel Alvarez, Arizona State University; Terry Bales, Santa Ana and Santiago Canyon College; Jonathan Buchsbaum, Queens College; Jeremy Butler, University of Alabama; Diane Carson, St. Louis Community College; Thomas D. Cooke, University of Missouri; David A. Daly, Southwest Missouri State University; Peter Flynn, Emerson College; Marsha Gordon, North Carolina State University; Elena Gorfinkel, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; Peter Haggart, University of Idaho; Brian Henderson, State University of New York at Buffalo; Scott Higgins, Wesleyan University; Eileen Jones, Chapman University; Bruce Hutchinson, University of Central Arkansas; Scott L. Jensen, Weber State College; Kathryn Kalinak, Rhode Island College; Jay B. Korinek, Henry Ford Community College; Sue Lawrence, Marist College; Karen B. Mann, Western Illinois University; Jeff Marker, University of North Georgia; Carey Martin, Liberty University; Paula Musegades, Emerson College; Charles R. Myers, Humboldt State University; Myoungsook Park, University of Iowa; Neil Rattigan, The University of New England; John W. Ravage, University of Wyoming; Jere Real, Lynchburg College; Celeste Reeb, University of Oregon; Lucille Rhodes, Long Island University; Randolph Rutsky, San Francisco State University; Zoran Samardzija, Columbia College, Chicago; H. Wayne Schuth, University of North Orleans; Ellen Seiter, University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Lesley Shelton, Texas Tech University; Scott Simmon, University of California–Davis; Cecile Starr; Tom Stempel, Los Angeles City College; J. P. Telotte, Georgia Tech University; Geneviève van Cauwenberg, Université de Liège; Mike Van Esler, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh Department of Radio TV Film; Charles C. Werberig, Rochester Institute of Technology; and Ken White, Diablo Valley College.

For advice and suggestions for this edition, we thank Maria Isabel Alvarez, Arizona State University; Terry Bales, Santa Ana and Santiago Canyon Colleges; Marsha Gordon, North Carolina State University; Elena Gorfinkel, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Bruce Hutchinson, University of Central Arkansas; Jeff Marker, University of North Georgia; Paula Musegades, Emerson College; and Lesley Shelton, Texas Tech University.

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we are grateful to the Department of Communication Arts, the Graduate School, the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, and the Institute for Research in the Humanities for four decades of encouragement. Closest to us are friends who have lightened our burden: Tino Balio, Maria Belodubrovskaya, Ben Brewster, Kelley Conway, Maxine Fleckner Ducey, Roch Gersbach, Sabine Gross, Erik Gunneson, Meg Hamel, Jim Healy, Mary Huelsbeck, Lea Jacobs, Vance Kepley, Michael King, J. J. Murphy, Jason Quist, Mary Rossa, Paddy Rourke, James Runde, Peter Sengstock, Marc Silberman, Ben Singer, Amy Sloper, Amanda Smith, Michael Trevis, and Sue Zaeske. Our intellectual debts to these colleagues are deepened by our admiration and affection.

Kristin Thompson
David Bordwell
Jeff Smith
Madison, WI
September 2020

PART
ONE

EARLY CINEMA

As the twentieth century began, Western Europe seemed to many the center of the world and the pinnacle of modern civilization. New inventions, economic expansion, and rising standards of living suggested that society had begun a new phase of progress. Yet in a few years Europe would be ravaged by war, and the United States of America would take Europe's place as a global power.

The late 1800s saw a dazzling procession of new technologies. Steam power and train transport had already revolutionized industry, but now life was radically changed by electricity and the internal combustion engine. The "second industrial revolution" of the 1890s transformed fields as diverse as pharmaceuticals (aspirins, disinfectants, anesthetics), metallurgy (the steel industry), and motor power (the Diesel engine). Breakthroughs in synthetic chemistry enabled scientists to devise plastics, the basis of the motion picture film.

Industrialization led to the growth of cities. European capitals were packed with migrants from the countryside and from other countries. Paris grew to nearly three million residents, London to almost seven million. Inequality was severe, with most people becoming factory workers, servants, or home-based artisans. Noise, pollution, traffic accidents, and poor sanitation were common. Still, urbanization created a distinct mass culture. Electricity turned major streets into dazzling displays of shop windows and advertising. Publishing boomed, with books and magazines joined by newspaper comic strips. Many people could sample entertainments—sports events, dance halls, cabarets, stage shows, amusement parks, and motion-picture theaters.

The major Western European countries continued to rule vast colonial empires. In 1901, the British Empire controlled India, Egypt, Hong Kong, Burma, Malaya, several areas of Africa, and other regions, while granting "dominion" status to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Nearly all portions of Africa became colonies of Belgium, Spain, Italy, Portugal, or

George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester

France. Southeast Asia was similarly carved up. Britain, along with Russia and Japan, seized areas of China.

Territories were split up with little concern for natural divisions of local cultures. The Western powers used their technological superiority to extract resources from their territories and subjugate the populations. Throughout the twentieth century, colonized peoples would struggle to throw off foreign rule.

The role of colonies was chiefly to supply rare items (tea, silk) or raw materials for European manufacturing. Even the nominally independent countries of South America depended upon European markets to buy their exports of copper, tin, nitrate, wool, wheat, coffee, and cocoa. Britain was central to the entire system of trade and manufacture. It controlled the strongest navy and merchant marine, and London was the world's center of finance.

As the nineteenth century was ending, Europe had a new rival. The Spanish-American War of 1898 resulted in the United States gaining control of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii, and part of Samoa. England had been known as the "workshop of the world," turning raw materials into consumer goods. But US manufacturing and service industries took the lead. During the late nineteenth century, railroad, oil, tobacco, and other industries were expanding rapidly.

Owing to hard times in Southern and Eastern Europe, a new wave of immigrants arrived on American shores after 1890. The population grew to 75 million in 1900, about the same as in France and far more than in Germany or England. America's enormous economic takeoff in the next three decades is partly attributable to this influx of new workers. Living mostly in ethnic communities within cities, these non-English speakers would form a sizable audience for the silent cinema.

The first decade of the new century saw a progressivist impulse in America, under the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. There were movements to give women the vote, to prohibit child labor, to enforce antitrust laws, and to institute regulations to protect consumers. This era was also one of virulent racism, scarred by many lynchings. African American progressives formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909.

American expansion came at a time when major European powers were continuing to jockey for global influence. Such maneuvering, as well as mutual distrust, led to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. This conflict gradually drew in countries from all over the globe. Although many Americans wanted no involvement, the United States entered hostilities in 1917 and broke the stalemate that had developed, ultimately forcing Germany to surrender in 1918.

The global balance of power had shifted. Germany lost all of its colonies, and the United States replaced Britain as the world's leading financial force. President Woodrow Wilson tried to expand progressivist principles on an international scale, proposing a League of Nations to foster world unity. The League, formed in 1919, helped to build a spirit of international cooperation during the 1920s, but it proved too weak to prevent lingering tensions from eventually causing a second international conflict.

During the two decades before World War I, the cinema was invented and grew from a small amusement-arcade business to an international industry. Films began as brief moving views presented as novelties, and, by the mid-1910s, the lengthy narrative feature became the basis for cinema programs.

The invention of cinema was a lengthy process, involving engineers and entrepreneurs in several countries. Struggles among patent holders in the United States slowed the development of the industry there, while French companies quickly seized the lead in markets throughout the world (Chapter 1).

From 1905 on, a rapid expansion in demand for motion-picture entertainment in the United States led to the spread of small movie theaters called nickelodeons. This demand was fueled in part by the rising immigrant population and in part by the shorter work hours gained by the increasingly militant labor-union movement. Soon America was by far the world's largest market for films—a situation that would allow it to increase its selling power abroad as well.

During the period of the "nickelodeon boom," the story film became the main type of fare offered on programs. Films made in France, Italy, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the United States, and elsewhere circulated widely around the world. Narrative traits and stylistic techniques changed rapidly as influences passed back and forth among countries. Movies grew longer, employed more editing, added explanatory intertitles, and featured a greater variety of camera distances. Adaptations from literature and lavish historical spectacles added prestige to the new art form (Chapter 2).

World War I had enormous effects on the cinema. The outbreak of hostilities triggered a severe cutback in French production, and the country lost its leading position in world markets. Italy encountered similar problems. The growing Hollywood film industry stepped in to fill the gap, expanding its distribution system abroad. By the war's end, American films had an international grip that other countries have struggled ever since to loosen.

During this era, filmmakers in many countries explored film form. Film editing grew subtle and complex; acting styles became varied; and directors exploited long takes, realistic decor, and camera movement. By the end of World War I, many of today's cinematic conventions had been established (Chapter 3).

CHAPTER 1

A Trip to the Moon

THE INVENTION AND EARLY YEARS OF THE CINEMA, 1880s–1904

The Big Swallow

The nineteenth century saw a vast proliferation of visual forms of popular culture. The industrial era offered ways of mass-producing lantern slides, books of photographs, and illustrated fiction. The middle and working classes of many countries could visit elaborate *dioramas*—painted backdrops with three-dimensional figures depicting famous historical events. Circuses, "freak shows," amusement parks, and music halls provided other forms of inexpensive entertainment. In the United States, many dramatic troupes toured, performing in the theaters and opera houses that existed even in small towns.

Hauling entire theater productions from town to town, however, was expensive. Similarly, most people had to travel long distances to visit major dioramas or amusement parks. In the days before airplane travel, few could hope to see firsthand the exotic lands they glimpsed on display in books of travel photographs or in their *stereoscopes*, handheld viewers that created three-dimensional effects by using oblong cards with two photographs printed side by side.

The cinema was to offer a cheaper, simpler way of providing entertainment to the masses. Filmmakers could record actors' performances, which then could be shown to audiences around the world. Travelogues would bring moving images of far-flung places directly to spectators' hometowns. Movies would become the most popular visual art form of the early twentieth century.

The cinema was invented during the 1890s. It appeared in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, as did the telephone (invented in 1876), the phonograph (invented in 1877), and the automobile (developed during the 1880s and 1890s). Like them, it was a technological device that became the basis of a large industry. It was also a new form of entertainment and a new artistic medium. During the first decade of the cinema's

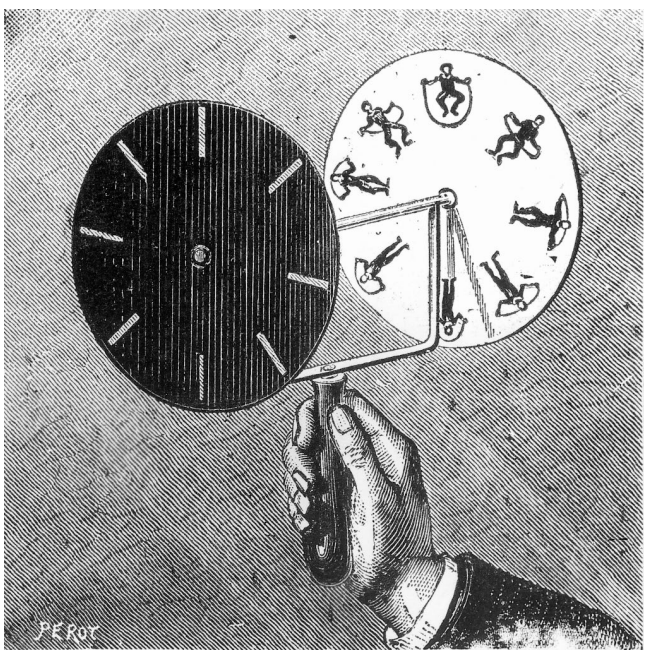
existence, inventors worked to improve the machines for making and showing films. Filmmakers also had to explore what sorts of images they could record, and exhibitors had to figure out how to present those images to audiences.

THE INVENTION OF THE CINEMA

The cinema is a complicated medium, and before it could be invented, several technological requirements had to be met.

Preconditions for Motion Pictures

First, scientists had to realize that the human eye will perceive motion if a series of slightly different images is placed before it in rapid succession—minimally, around sixteen per second. During the nineteenth century, scientists explored this property of vision. Several optical toys gave an illusion of movement by using a small number of drawings, each altered somewhat. In 1832, Belgian physicist Joseph Plateau and Austrian geometry professor Simon Stampfer independently created an optical device called the Phenakistoscope (**1.1**). The Zoetrope, invented in 1833, contained a series of drawings on a narrow strip of paper inside a revolving drum (**1.2**).



George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

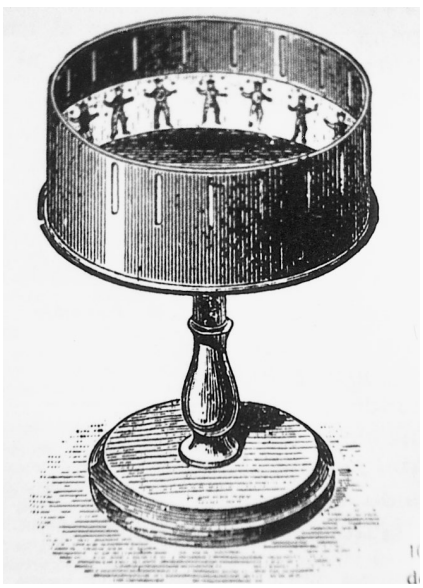
1.1 A Phenakistoscope's spinning disc of figures gives the illusion of movement when the viewer looks through a slot in the stationary disc.

The Zoetrope was widely sold after 1867, along with other optical toys. In these toys, the same action was repeated over and over.

A second technological requirement for the cinema was the capacity to project a rapid series of images on a surface. Since the seventeenth century, entertainers and educators had been using "magic lanterns" to project glass lantern slides, and some could rapidly flash two or three changes of a figure's position. But there had been no way to show a large number of images fast enough to create a sustained illusion of movement.

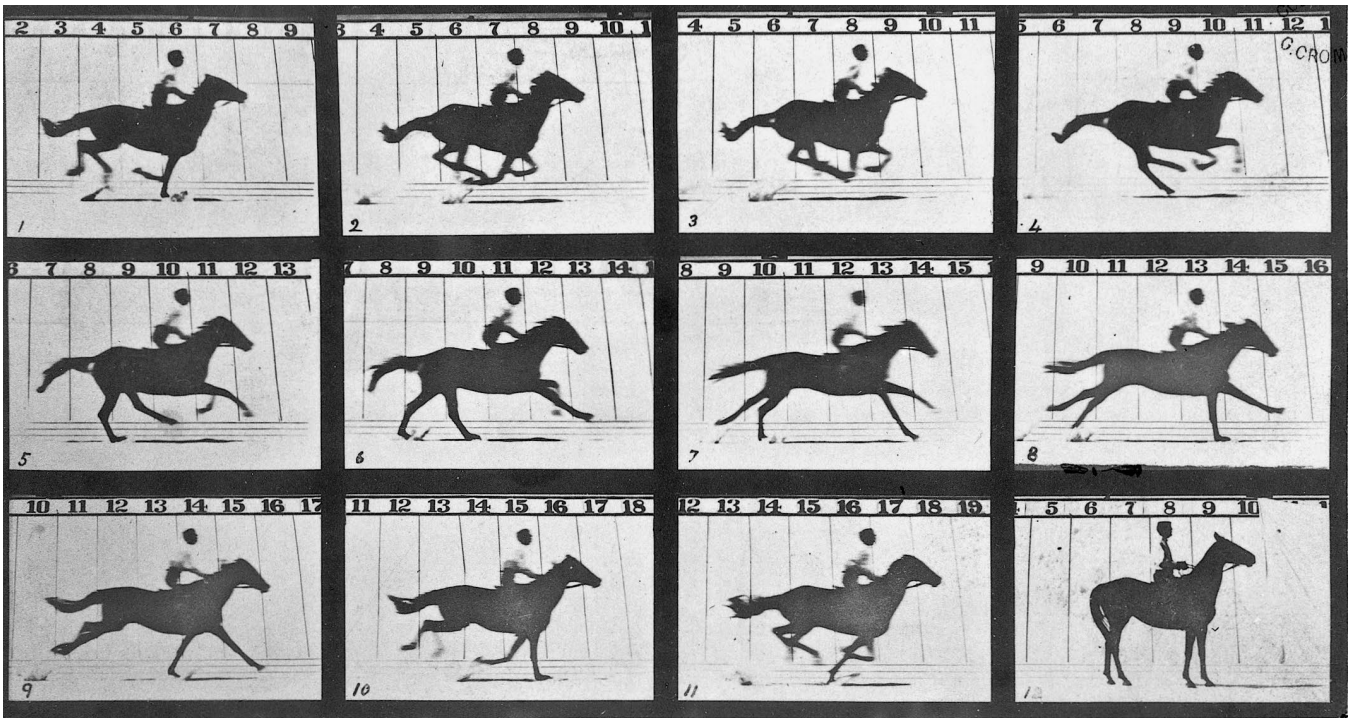
If it had been easy to make a long series of drawings on some support, cinema would not have needed photography. Photography, however, was the simplest way to produce many lifelike images. The problem was that the illusion of movement needed at least sixteen photographs exposed per second. It took inventors several years to achieve such a short exposure time. The first still photograph was made on a glass plate in 1826 by Claude Niépce, but it required an exposure time of eight hours. For years, photographs were made on glass or metal, without the use of negatives, so only one copy of each image was possible; exposures took several minutes each. Not until 1878 did split-second exposure times become feasible. Rapid photography became the third precondition for cinema as we know it.

Fourth, the cinema would require that photographs be printed on a base flexible enough to be passed through a camera rapidly. Strips or discs of glass could



George Eastman International Museum of Photography

1.2 Looking through the slots in a revolving Zoetrope, the viewer receives an impression of movement.



George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

1.3 One of Muybridge's earliest motion studies, photographed on June 19, 1878.

be used, but only a short series of images could be registered on them. In 1888, George Eastman devised a still camera that made photographs on rolls of sensitized paper. This camera, which he named the Kodak, simplified photography so that unskilled amateurs could take pictures. The next year Eastman introduced transparent celluloid roll film, creating a breakthrough in the move toward cinema. The film was intended for still cameras, but inventors soon used the same flexible material in designing machines to take and project motion pictures.

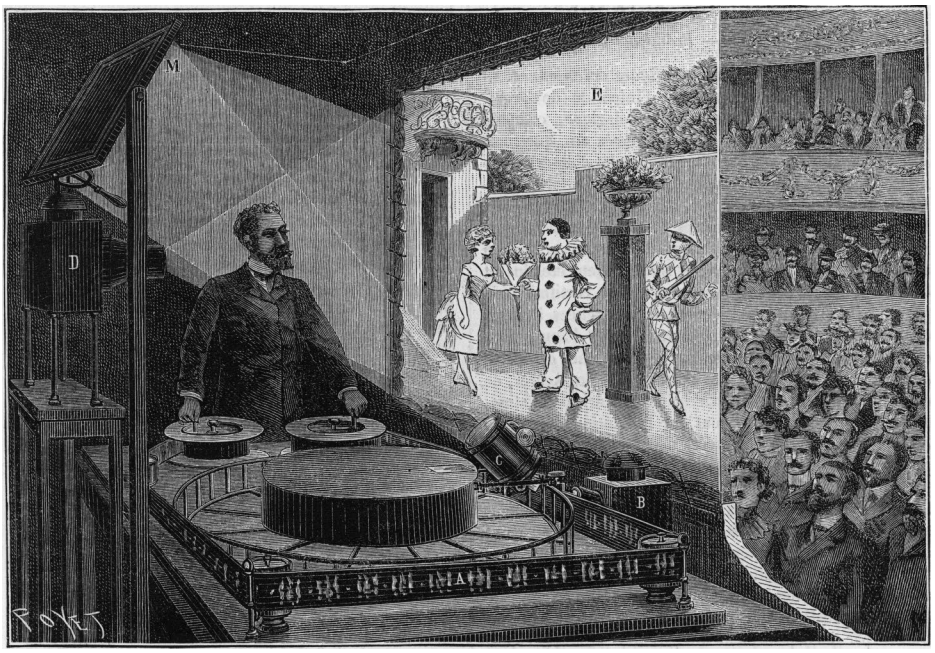
Fifth, and finally, experimenters needed to find a suitable intermittent mechanism for cameras and projectors. In the camera, the strip of film had to stop briefly while light entered through the lens and exposed each frame. A shutter then covered the film as another frame moved into place. Similarly, in the projector, each frame stopped for an instant in the aperture while a beam of light projected it onto a screen. Again a shutter passed behind the lens while the filmstrip moved. At least sixteen frames had to slide into place, stop, and move away each second. (A strip of film sliding continuously past the gate would create a blur.) Fortunately, other inventions of the century also needed intermittent mechanisms to stop and start quickly. For example, the sewing machine (invented in 1846) advanced strips of fabric several times per second while a needle pierced them. Intermittent mechanisms usually consisted of a gear with slots or notches spaced around its edge.

By the 1890s, all the technical conditions for the cinema existed. But who would bring the elements together in a way that could be exploited on a wide basis?

Major Precursors of Motion Pictures

Some inventors made important contributions without creating moving photographic images. Several men were simply interested in analyzing motion. In 1878, ex-governor of California Leland Stanford asked photographer Eadweard Muybridge to find a way of photographing running horses to help study their gaits. Muybridge set up a row of twelve cameras, each making an exposure in one-thousandth of a second. The photos recorded one-half-second intervals of movement (**1.3**). Muybridge later made a lantern to project moving images of horses, but these were drawings copied from his photographs onto a revolving disc. Muybridge did not go on to invent motion pictures, but he made a major contribution to anatomical science through thousands of motion studies using his multiple-camera setup.

In 1882, inspired by Muybridge's work, French physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey studied the flight of birds and other rapid animal movements by means of a photographic



Chronicle/Alamy Stock Photo

1.4 Using long flexible bands of drawings, Reynaud's Praxinoscope rear-projected cartoon figures onto a screen on which the scenery was painted.

gun. Shaped like a rifle, it exposed twelve images around the edge of a circular glass plate that made a single revolution in one second. In 1888, Marey built a box-type camera that used an intermittent mechanism to expose a series of photographs on a strip of paper film at speeds of up to 120 frames per second. Marey was the first to combine flexible film stock and an intermittent mechanism in photographing motion. He was interested in analyzing movements rather than in reproducing them on a screen, but his work inspired other inventors. During this period, many other scientists used various devices to record and analyze motion.

A fascinating and isolated figure in the history of the invention of the cinema was Frenchman Émile Reynaud. In 1877, he had built an optical toy, the Projecting Praxinoscope. This was a spinning drum, rather like the Zoetrope, but one in which viewers saw the moving images in a series of mirrors rather than through slots. Around 1882, he devised a way of using mirrors and a lantern to project a brief series of drawings on a screen. In 1889, Reynaud exhibited a much larger version of the Praxinoscope. From 1892 on, he regularly gave public performances using long, broad strips of hand-painted frames (**1.4**). These were the first public exhibitions of moving images, though the effect on the screen was jerky and slow. The labor involved in making the bands meant that Reynaud's films could not easily be reproduced. Strips of photographs were more practical, and in 1895 Reynaud started using a camera to make his Praxinoscope films. By 1900, he was out of business, however, due to competition from other, simpler motion-picture projection systems. In despair, he destroyed his machines, though replicas have been constructed.

Another Frenchman came close to inventing the cinema as early as 1888—six years before the first commercial showings of moving photographs. That year, Louis Le Prince, working in England, was able to make some brief films, shot at about sixteen frames per second, using Kodak's recently introduced paper roll film. To be projected, however, the frames needed to be printed on a transparent strip; lacking flexible celluloid, Le Prince apparently was unable to devise a satisfactory projector. In 1890, while traveling in France, he disappeared, along with his valise of patent applications, creating a mystery that has never been solved. His camera was never exploited commercially and had virtually no influence on the subsequent invention of the cinema.

An International Process of Invention

We cannot attribute the invention of the cinema to a single source. There was no one moment when the cinema emerged. Rather, the technology of the motion picture came about through an accumulation of contributions, primarily from the United States, Germany, England, and France.

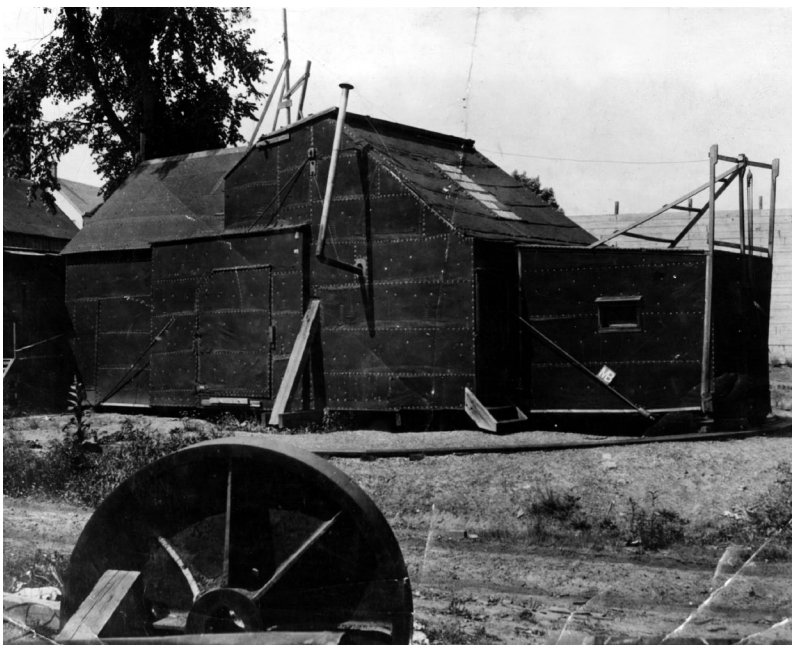
Edison, Dickson, and the Kinetoscope In 1888, Thomas Edison, already the successful inventor of the phonograph and the electric light bulb, decided to design machines for making and showing moving photographs. Much of the work was done by his assistant, W. K. L. Dickson. Because Edison's phonograph worked by

recording sound on cylinders, the pair tried fruitlessly to make rows of tiny photographs around similar cylinders. In 1889, Edison went to Paris and saw Marey's camera, which used strips of flexible film. Dickson then obtained some Eastman Kodak film stock and began working on a new type of machine. By 1891, the Kinetograph camera and Kinetoscope viewing box (**1.5**) were ready to be patented and demonstrated. Dickson sliced sheets of Eastman film into strips 1 inch wide (roughly 35 millimeters) and spliced them end to end. He punched four holes on either side of each frame so that toothed gears could pull the film through the camera and Kinetoscope. Dickson's early decisions influenced the entire history of the cinema; 35 mm film stock with four perforations per frame remained the norm for more than a hundred years. Initially, however, the film was exposed at about forty-six frames per second—much faster than the average speed later adopted for silent filmmaking.

George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

1.5 The Kinetoscope was a peephole device that ran the film around a series of rollers. Viewers activated it by putting a coin in a slot.

Before Edison and Dickson could exploit their machine commercially, they needed films. They built a small studio, called the Black Maria, on the grounds of Edison's New Jersey laboratory and were ready for production by January 1893 (**1.6**). The films lasted only twenty seconds or so—the longest run of film that the Kinetoscope could hold. Most films featured well-known sports figures, excerpts from noted vaudeville acts, or performances by dancers or acrobats (**1.7**). Annie Oakley displayed her riflery, and a bodybuilder flexed his muscles. A few Kinetoscope shorts were knockabout comic skits, forerunners of the story film.



Everett Historical/Shutterstock

1.6 Edison's studio was named after the police paddy wagons, or Black Marias, that it resembled. The slanted portion of the roof opened to admit sunlight for filming, and the whole building revolved on a track to catch optimal sunlight.

Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division Washington, D. C. 20540 USA dcu [LC_00694109]

1.7 Amy Muller danced in the *Black Maria* on March 24, 1896. The black background and patch of sunlight from the opening in the roof were standard traits of Kinetoscope films.

Department of the Interior/PhotoQuest/Getty Images

1.8 A typical entertainment parlor, with phonographs (note the dangling earphones) at left and center and a row of Kinetoscopes at right. Later videogame arcades would operate on the same business model.

Edison had exploited his phonograph by leasing it to special phonograph parlors, where the public paid a nickel to hear sound through earphones. (Only in 1895 did phonographs become available for home use.) He did the same with the Kinetoscope. On April 14, 1894, the first Kinetoscope parlor opened in New York. Soon other parlors, both in the United States and abroad, exhibited the machines (**1.8**). For about two years the Kinetoscope was highly profitable, but it was eclipsed when other inventors, inspired by Edison's new device, found ways to project films on a screen.

European Contributions Another early system for taking and projecting films was invented by the Germans Max and Emil Skladanowsky. Their Bioscop held two strips of film, each 3½ inches wide, running side by side; frames of each were projected alternately. The Skladanowsky brothers showed a fifteen-minute program at a large vaudeville theater in Berlin on November 1, 1895—nearly two months before the famous Lumière screening at the Grand Café. The Bioscop system was too cumbersome, however, and the Skladanowskys eventually adopted the standard 35 mm, single-strip film used by more influential inventors. The brothers toured Europe through 1897, but they did not establish a stable production company.

The Lumière brothers, Louis and Auguste, invented a projection system that helped make the cinema a commercially viable enterprise internationally. Their family company, Lumière Frères, based in Lyon, France, was the biggest European manufacturer of photographic plates. In 1894, a local Kinetoscope exhibitor asked them to produce short films that would be cheaper than the ones sold by Edison. Soon they had designed an elegant little camera, the Cinématographe, which used 35 mm film and an intermittent mechanism modeled on that of the sewing machine (**1.9**). The camera could serve as a printer when

George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

1.9 Unlike many other early cameras, the Lumière Cinématographe was small and portable. This 1930 photo shows Francis Doublier, one of the firm's representatives who toured the world showing and making films during the 1890s, posing with his Cinématographe.

Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory

Rough Sea at Dover

1.10, *left* The Lumière brothers' first film, *Workers Leaving the Factory*, was a single shot made outside their photographic factory. It embodied the essential appeal of the first films: realistic movement of actual people.

1.11, *right* Birt Acres's *Rough Sea at Dover*, one of the earliest English films, showed large waves crashing against a seawall.

the positive copies were made. Then, mounted in front of a magic lantern, it formed part of the projector as well. One important decision the Lumières made was to shoot their films at sixteen frames per second, rather than the forty-six frames per second used by Edison. Sixteen frames per second became the most commonly used rate for about twenty years. The first film made with this system was *Workers Leaving the Factory*, apparently shot in March 1895 (**1.10**; **Video 1.1**). It was shown in public at a meeting of the Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie Nationale in Paris on March 22. Six further showings to scientific and commercial groups followed, including additional films shot by Louis.

On December 28, 1895, one of the most famous events in film history took place. The location was a room in the Grand Café in Paris. In those days, cafés were gathering spots where people sipped coffee, read newspapers, and were entertained by singers and other performers. That evening, fashionable patrons paid a franc to see a twenty-five-minute program of ten films, about a minute each. Among the films shown were a close view of Auguste Lumière and his wife feeding their baby, a staged comic scene of a boy stepping on a hose to cause a puzzled gardener to squirt himself (later named *L'arroseur arrosé*, or "The Waterer Watered"), and a shot of the sea.

Although the first shows did moderate business, within weeks the Lumières were offering twenty shows a day, with long lines of spectators waiting to get in. They moved quickly to exploit this success, sending representatives all over the world to show films and make more of them.

At the same time that the Lumière brothers were developing their system, a parallel process of invention was going on in England. The Edison Kinetoscope had premiered in London in October 1894, and the parlor that displayed the machines did so well that its owners asked R. W. Paul, a producer of photographic equipment, to make some extra machines for it. For reasons that are still not clear, Edison had not patented the Kinetoscope outside the United States, so Paul was free to sell copies to anyone who wanted them. Because Edison would supply films only to exhibitors who had leased his own machines, Paul also had to invent a camera and make films to go with his duplicate Kinetoscopes.

By March 1895, Paul and his partner, Birt Acres, had a functional camera, which they based partly on the one Marey had made seven years earlier for analyzing motion. Acres shot thirteen films during the first half of the year, but the partnership broke up. Paul went on improving the camera, aiming to serve the Kinetoscope market, whereas Acres concentrated on creating a projector. On January 14, 1896, Acres showed some of his films to the Royal Photographic Society. Among those was *Rough Sea at Dover* (**1.11**), which became one of the most popular first films.

Seeing such one-shot films of simple actions or landscapes today, we can hardly grasp how impressive they were to audiences who had never seen moving photographic images. A contemporary review of Acres's Royal Photographic Society program hints, however, at their appeal:

> The most successful effect, and one which called forth rounds of applause from the usually placid members of the "Royal," was a reproduction of a number of breaking waves, which may be seen to roll in from the sea, curl over against a jetty, and break into clouds of snowy spray that seemed to start from the screen.[1]

Acres gave other demonstrations, but he did not systematically exploit his projector and films.

Projected films were soon shown regularly in England, however. The Lumière brothers sent a representative who opened a successful run of the Cinématographe in London on February 20, 1896, about a month after Acres's first screening. R. W. Paul went on improving his camera and invented a projector, which he used in several

theaters to show copies of the films Acres had shot the year before. Unlike other inventors, Paul sold his machines rather than leasing them. By doing so, he not only speeded up the spread of the film industry in Great Britain but also supplied filmmakers and exhibitors abroad who were unable to get other machines. Among them was one of the most important early directors, Georges Méliès.

American Developments During this period, projection systems and cameras were also being devised in the United States. Three important rival groups competed to introduce a commercially successful system.

Woodville Latham and his sons Otway and Gray began work on a camera and projector in 1894 and were able to show one film to reporters on April 21, 1895. They even opened a small storefront theater in May, where their program ran for years. The projector did not attract much attention because it cast only a dim image. The Latham group did make one considerable contribution to film technology, however. Most cameras and projectors could use only a short stretch of film, lasting less than three minutes, because the tension created by a longer, heavier roll would break the film. The Lathams added a simple loop to create slack and thus relieve the tension, allowing much longer films to be made. The Latham loop has been used in most film cameras and projectors ever since. Indeed, so important was the technique that a patent involving it was to shake up the entire American film industry in 1912.

A second group of entrepreneurs, the partnership of C. Francis Jenkins and Thomas Armat, first exhibited their Phantoscope projector at a commercial exposition in Atlanta in October 1895, showing Kinetoscope films. Partly because of competition from the Latham group and a Kinetoscope exhibitor, who also showed films at the exposition, and partly because of dim, unsteady projection, the Phantoscope attracted skimpy audiences. Later that year, Jenkins and Armat split up. Armat improved the projector, renamed it the Vitascope, and obtained backing from the entrepreneurial team of Norman Raff and Frank Gammon. Raff and Gammon were nervous about offending Edison, so in February they demonstrated the machine for him. Because the Kinetoscope's initial popularity was fading, Edison agreed to manufacture Armat's projector and supply films for it. For publicity purposes, it was marketed as "Edison's Vitascope," even though he had no hand in devising it.

The Vitascope's public premiere was at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York on April 23, 1896. Six films were shown, five of them originally shot for the Kinetoscope; the sixth was Acres's *Rough Sea at Dover*, which again was singled out for praise. The showing was a triumph. Although it was not the first time films had been projected commercially in the United States, it marked the beginning of projected movies as a viable industry there.

George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

1.12 At the right, a Mutoscope, a penny-in-the-slot machine with a crank that turned a drum containing a series of photographs. The stand at the left shows the circular arrangement of the cards, each of which flipped down and was briefly held still to create the illusion of movement.

The third major early invention in the United States began as another peepshow device. In late 1894, Herman Casler patented the Mutoscope, a flip-card device (**1.12**). He needed a camera, however, and sought advice from his friend W. K. L. Dickson, who had terminated his working relationship with Edison. With other partners, they formed the American Mutoscope Company. By early 1896, Casler and Dickson had their camera, but the market for peepshow movies had declined, and they decided to concentrate on projection. Using several films made during that year, the American Mutoscope Company soon had programs playing theaters around the country and touring with vaudeville shows.

The camera and projector were unusual, employing 70 mm film that yielded larger, sharper images. By 1897, American Mutoscope was the most popular film company in the country. That year the firm also began showing its

films in penny arcades and other entertainment spots, using the Mutoscope. The simple card holder of the Mutoscope was less likely to break down than was the Kinetoscope, and American Mutoscope soon dominated the peepshow side of film exhibition as well. Some Mutoscopes remained in use for decades.

By 1897, the invention of the cinema was largely completed. There were two principal means of exhibition: peepshow devices for individual viewers and projection systems for audiences. Typically, projectors used 35 mm film with sprocket holes of similar shape and placement, so most films could be shown on different brands of projectors. But what kinds of films were being made? Who was making them? How and where were people seeing them?

EARLY FILMMAKING AND EXHIBITION

The cinema may have been an astonishing novelty in the 1890s, but it came into being within a varied context of public leisure-time activities. All but the tiniest towns had theaters, and traveling shows crisscrossed the country. Dramatic troupes put on plays, lecturers used magic-lantern slides to illustrate their talks, and concerts featuring the newly invented phonograph brought the sounds of big-city orchestras to a wide public. Vaudeville gave middle-class audiences a variety of acts on a single program, ranging from performing animals to plate-spinning jugglers to slapstick comedians. Burlesque offered a similar potpourri of acts, though less family-oriented with their vulgar comedy and occasional nudity. People living in large cities could go to amusement parks, such as Coney Island in New York, which boasted roller coasters and elephant rides.

Scenics, Topicals, and Fiction Films

The new medium of film moved smoothly into this spectrum of popular entertainment. Like the early films that we have already mentioned, most subjects were nonfiction, or *actualities.* These included *scenics*, or short travelogues, offering views of distant lands. News events might be depicted in brief *topicals.*

In many cases, cinematographers covered news events in the locations where they occurred. Often, however, filmmakers recreated current events in the studio—both to save money and to make up for the fact that cameramen had not been on the scene. In 1898, for example, both American and European producers used model ships in miniature landscapes to recreate the sinking of the battleship *Maine* and other key occurrences relating to the Spanish-American War. Audiences probably did not believe that these faked scenes were actual records of real incidents. Instead, they accepted them as representations of those incidents, comparable to engravings in news magazines.

From the beginning, *fiction films* were also important. Typically, these were brief staged scenes. The Lumières' *Arroseur arrosé*, presented in their first program in 1895, showed a boy tricking a gardener by stepping on his hose. Such simple jokes formed a major genre of early filmmaking. Some of these fiction films were shot outdoors, but simple painted backdrops were quickly adopted and remained common for decades.

Creating an Appealing Program

Looking at the earliest films, we may find them so alien that we wonder what sort of appeal they held for audiences. With a little imagination, though, we can see that people then were probably interested in films for much the same reasons that we are. Every type of early film has some equivalent in contemporary media.

The glimpses of news events, for example, may seem crude, yet they are comparable to the short clips shown in mass media today. Early scenics gave viewers glimpses of faraway lands, just as today's video documentaries do. The entertainment mixture available on YouTube is comparable to early film programs. Despite the variety of early genres, fiction films gradually became the most popular theatrical attraction—a position they have held ever since.

Most films in this early period consisted of a single shot. The camera was set up in one position, and the action unfolded during a continuous take. In some cases, filmmakers did make a series of shots of the same subject. The resulting shots were then treated as a series of separate films. Exhibitors had the option of buying the whole series of shots and running them together, thus approximating a multishot film, or they might choose to buy only a few of the shots, combining them with other films or lantern slides to create a unique program. During this early period, exhibitors had considerable control over the shape of their programs—a control that would gradually disappear from 1899 onward, as producers began making longer films containing multiple shots.

Quite a few early exhibitors had experience running lantern-slide programs or other forms of public entertainment. They mixed scenics, topicals, and fiction films in a single, varied program, usually with musical accompaniment. In the more modest presentations, a pianist might play; in vaudeville theaters, the house orchestra provided music. In some cases, exhibitors had noises synchronized with the actions on the screen. The exhibitor might lecture

The Rapid Spread of the Cinema around the World: Some Representative Examples

1896	
March 1	A Lumière program premieres in Brussels, Belgium.
May 11	A magician, Carl Hertz, shows R. W. Paul films at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa, using a projector purchased from Paul.
May 15	A Lumière program begins a run in Madrid, Spain.
May 17	A Lumière operator shows films in St. Petersburg, Russia.
July 7	Lumière operators show films in a rented room in Watson's Hotel, Bombay, India.
July 8	A Lumière program opens in a fashionable district of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
July 15	The first Lumière screening in Czechoslovakia takes place in the Casino in Karlovy Vary.
August	Carl Hertz shows his R. W. Paul program at the Melbourne Opera House, Australia. (The first Lumière program in Australia begins in Sydney on September 28.)
August 11	A Lumière operator shows films as part of a Shanghai vaudeville program.
August 15	A highly successful run of Lumière films begins at a rented hall in Mexico City.
December	A Lumière program shows at a café in Alexandria, Egypt.
1897	
January 28	Lumière films are shown in a fashionable theater in Maracaibo, Venezuela.
February 15	Under the supervision of a Lumière representative, a Japanese entrepreneur premieres the Cinématographe in a theater in Osaka. (Edison's Vitascope was shown a week later, also in Osaka.)
Late February	A Lumière program premieres in Ruse, Bulgaria.
July	An Edison representative tours Chinese tea houses and amusement parks.

during part of the program, describing the exotic landscapes, the current events, and the brief stories passing across the screen. At the least, the exhibitor would announce the titles because early films lacked opening credits and intertitles explaining the action. Some showmen mixed films with lantern slides or provided musical interludes using a phonograph. During these early years, the audience's response depended significantly on the exhibitor's skill in organizing and presenting the program.

During the first decade of cinema, films were shown in many countries around the world. But the making of films was concentrated largely in the three principal countries where the motion-picture camera had originated: France, England, and the United States.

The Growth of the French Film Industry

The Lumières' early screenings were successful, but the brothers believed that film would be a short-lived fad. As a result, they moved quickly to exploit the Cinématographe. They initially avoided selling their machines, instead sending operators to tour abroad and show films in rented theaters and cafés. These operators also made one-shot scenics of local points of interest. From 1896 on, the Lumière catalogue rapidly expanded to include hundreds of views of Spain, Egypt, Italy, Japan, and other countries. Although the Lumière brothers are usually remembered for their scenics and topicals, they also produced many staged films, usually brief comic scenes.

1.13 Lumière operator Eugène Promio influenced many filmmakers by placing his camera in moving boats to make several of his films, including *Egypte: Panorama des rives du Nil* ("Egypt: Panorama of the Banks of the Nile," 1896).

Some of the Lumière operators' films were technically innovative. Eugène Promio, for example, is usually credited with originating the moving camera. The earliest cameras were supported by rigid tripods that did not allow the camera to swivel and make panorama, or panning, shots. In 1896, Promio introduced movement into a view of Venice by placing the tripod and camera in a gondola. Other filmmakers continued this practice, placing their cameras in boats and on trains (**1.13**). Traveling shots of this type (and soon panning movements as well) were associated mainly with scenics and topicals during this era.

Because the Lumières quickly began exhibiting their films abroad, the first showings of projected motion pictures in many countries were put on by their representatives. Thus the history of the cinema in many nations begins with the arrival of the Cinématographe (see The Rapid Spread of Cinema around the World p. 12).

The Lumières and a few other firms made the cinema an international phenomenon. The Lumières further aided the spread of cinema when, in 1897, they began selling their Cinématographes. But the same year saw a setback for their firm.

On May 4, 1897, during a film screening at the Charity Bazaar in Paris, a curtain was ignited by the ether being used to fuel the lamp of the projector (which was not a Cinématographe). The resulting blaze was one of the worst tragedies in the history of the cinema, killing about 125 people. As a result, the cinema lost some of its attraction for fashionable city dwellers. In France, for several years, films were mainly exhibited in less lucrative traveling fairground shows (*fêtes foraines*). The Lumières continued producing films, but gradually more innovative rivals made their films seem old-fashioned. Their firm ceased production in 1905, though Louis and Auguste remained innovators in the area of still photography.

Following the initial success of the Lumière Cinématographe in 1895, other film production firms appeared in France. Among these was a small company started by a man who was perhaps the single most important filmmaker of the cinema's early years, Georges Méliès (see Georges Méliès, Magician of the Cinema pp. 14–15).

Two other firms that would dominate the French film industry were formed shortly after the invention of the cinema. Charles Pathé was a phonograph seller and exhibitor in the early 1890s. In 1895, he purchased some of R. W. Paul's imitation Kinetoscopes, and the following year formed Pathé Frères, which initially made most of its money on phonographs. From 1901, however, Pathé concentrated more on film production, and profits soared. The firm expanded rapidly. In 1902, it built a glass-sided studio and began selling the Pathé camera, which became the world's most widely used camera until the end of the 1910s.

At first Pathé's production was somewhat derivative, borrowing ideas from Méliès and from American and English films. For example, in 1901, Ferdinand Zecca, the company's most important director, made *Scenes from My Balcony.* It picked up on the vogue, recently started in England, for shots presenting things as if seen through telescopes or microscopes (**1.17**, **1.18**). Pathé's films were extremely popular. Although it took a sale of only 15 prints of a film to break even, actual sales averaged 350 prints. Pathé expanded abroad, opening sales offices in London, New York, Moscow, Berlin, and St. Petersburg. Selling both projectors and films, Pathé encouraged people to enter the exhibition business, thus creating more demand for Pathé films. Within a few years, Pathé Frères became the single largest film company in the world.

Its main rival in France was a smaller firm formed by inventor Léon Gaumont. Like Lumière Frères, Gaumont initially dealt in equipment for still photography. The firm began producing films in 1897. These were mostly made by Alice Guy, the first female filmmaker (**Video 1.1**). Gaumont's involvement in film production remained limited in this era because he was more concerned with technical innovations in film equipment. Building a production studio in 1905 made Gaumont more prominent, largely through the work of director Louis Feuillade.

England and the Brighton School

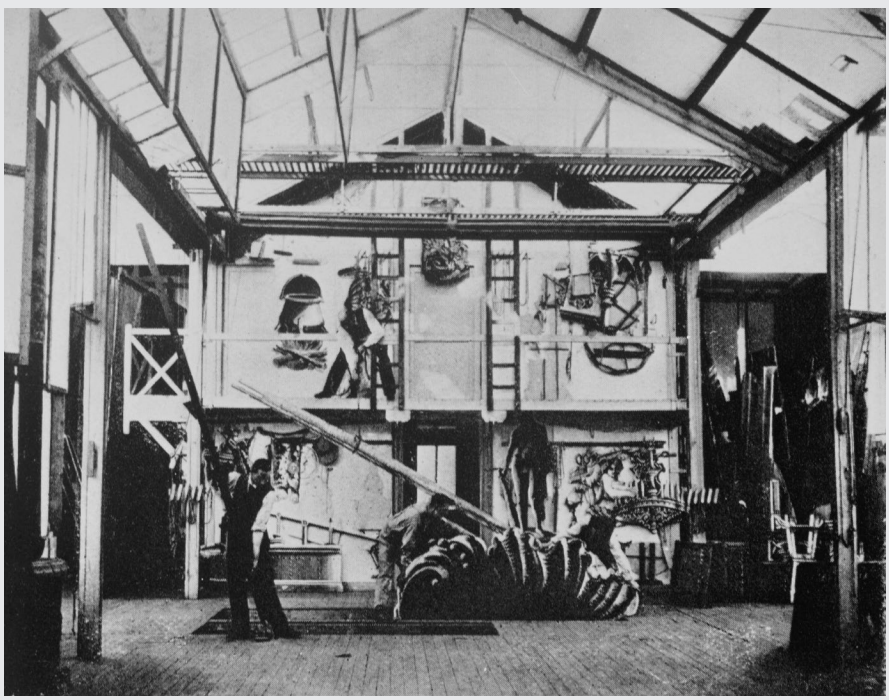
After the first public screenings in early 1896, film exhibition spread quickly in England, largely because R.

GEORGES MÉLIÈS, MAGICIAN OF THE CINEMA

Méliès was a performing magician who owned his own theater. After seeing the Lumière Cinématographe in 1895, he decided to add films to his program, but the Lumière brothers were not yet selling machines. In early 1896, he obtained a projector from English inventor R. W. Paul and, by studying it, was able to build his own camera. He was soon showing films at his theater.

Although Méliès is remembered mainly for his delightful fantasy movies, replete with camera tricks and painted scenery, he made films in all the genres of the day. His earliest work, most of which is lost, included many Lumière-style scenics and brief comedies, filmed outdoors. During his first year of production, he made seventy-eight films, including his first trick film, *The Vanishing Lady* (1896). In it, Méliès appears as a magician who transforms a woman into a skeleton. The trick was accomplished by stopping the camera and substituting the skeleton for the woman. Later, Méliès used stop-motion and other special effects to create more complex magic and fantasy scenes. These tricks had to be accomplished in the camera, while filming; prior to the mid-1920s, few laboratory manipulations were possible. Méliès also acted in many of his films, recognizable as a dapper and spry figure with a bald head, moustache, and pointed beard.

In order to be able to control the mise-en-scène and cinematography of his films, Méliès built a small glass-enclosed studio. Finished by early 1897, the studio permitted Méliès to design and construct sets painted on canvas flats (**1.14**). Even working in this studio, however, Méliès continued to create various kinds of films. In 1898, for example, he filmed some reconstructed topicals, such as *Divers at Work on the Wreck of the "Maine"* (**1.15**). His 1899 film, *The Dreyfus Affair*, told the story of the Jewish officer convicted of treason in 1894 on the basis of false evidence. The controversy was still raging when Méliès made



Album/Alamy Stock Photo

1.14 The interior of the Star studio, with Méliès on the balcony lifting a rolled backdrop while assistants arrange a large painted shell and trapdoors. Painted theater-style flats and smaller set elements are stored at the right rear and hang on the back wall.

W. Paul was willing to sell projectors. At first, most films were grouped together to be shown as a single act on the program of a music hall (the British equivalent of American vaudeville theaters). Beginning in 1897, short, cheap film shows were also widely presented in fairgrounds, appealing to working-class audiences (**1.19**).

At first, most English filmmakers offered the usual novelty subjects. For example, in 1896, Paul made *Twins' Tea Party* (**1.20**; **Video 1.2**). Topicals showing the annual Derby were popular, and both the parade celebrating Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897 and events relating to the Boer War in South Africa were widely circulated. Some of these early newsreels consisted of more than

Divers at Work on the Wreck of the "Maine"

1.15 One of many reconstructed documentaries relating to the sinking of the American battleship *Maine*, which began the Spanish-American War. Georges Méliès's *Divers at Work on the Wreck of the "Maine"* used a painted set with actors playing the divers. A fish tank in front of the camera suggested an undersea scene.

A Trip to the Moon

1.16 The space capsule lands in the Man in the Moon's eye in Méliès's fantasy *A Trip to the Moon.*

his pro-Dreyfus picture. As was customary at the time, he released each of the ten shots as a separate film. When shown together, the shots combined into one of the most complex works of the cinema's early years. With his next work, *Cinderella* (1899), Méliès began joining multiple shots and selling them as one film.

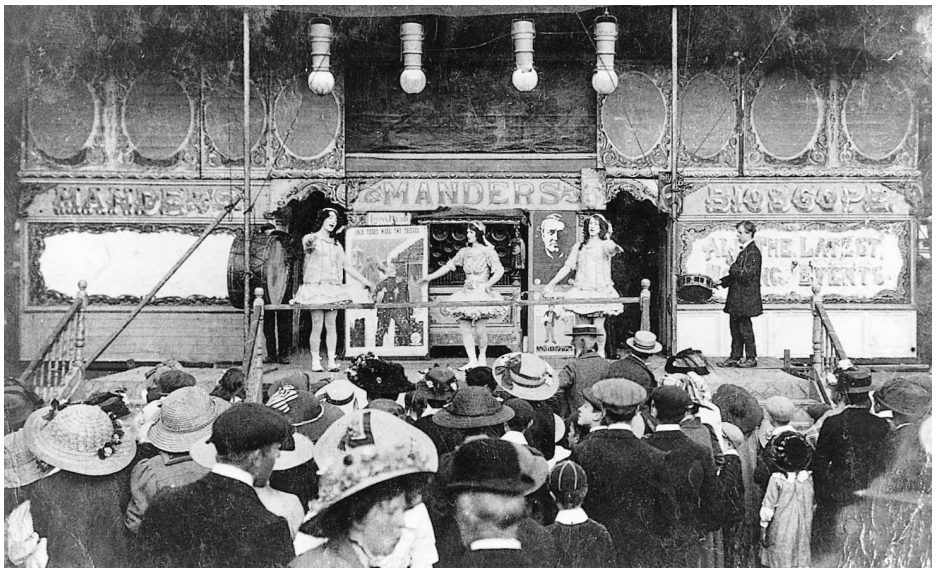
Méliès's films, and especially his fantasies, were extremely popular in France and abroad, and they were widely imitated. They were also commonly pirated, and Méliès had to open a sales office in the United States in 1903 to protect his interests. Among the most celebrated of his films was *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), a comic science-fiction story of a group of scientists traveling to the moon in a space capsule and escaping after being taken prisoner by a race of subterranean creatures (**1.16**). Méliès often enhanced the beauty of his elaborately designed mise-en-scène by using hand-applied tinting (**Color Plate 1.1**).

Except in Méliès's first years of production, many of his films involved sophisticated stop-motion effects. Devils burst out of a cloud of smoke, pretty women vanish, and leaping men change into demons in midair. Some historians have criticized Méliès for depending on static theatrical sets instead of editing. Yet recent research has shown that in fact his stop-motion effects also utilized editing. He would cut the film in order to match the movement of one object perfectly with that of the thing into which it was transformed. Such cuts were designed to be unnoticeable, but clearly Méliès was a master of this type of editing (**Video 1.1**).

For a time, Méliès's films were widely successful. After 1905, however, his fortunes slowly declined. His tiny firm could not satisfy the burgeoning demand for films. He continued to produce quality films, including his late masterpiece *Conquest of the Pole* (1912), but eventually these came to seem old-fashioned. In 1912, deep in debt, Méliès stopped producing, having made 510 films (about 40 percent of which survive). He died in 1938, after decades of working in his wife's candy and toy shop.

Scenes from My Balcony

1.17, 1.18 One of many mildly risqué films made in this early period, Zecca's *Scenes from My Balcony* shows a man looking through a telescope, followed by shots of what he sees, including a woman undressing.



British Film Institute Stills, Posters and Designs, London.

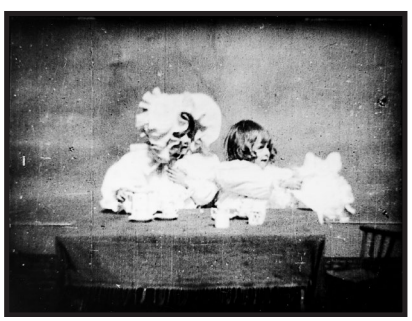
1.19 A typical fairground film show in England, about 1900. Behind the elaborate painted façades, the auditoriums were simple tents. Note here the picture of Thomas Edison in the center and the use of a bass drum to attract spectators.

one shot. The operator might simply stop and restart the camera to capture only highlights of the action, or he might actually splice bits of film together to hurry the action along. Similarly, some scenics were influenced by the Lumière films' placement of the camera on moving vehicles. *Phantom rides*, designed to give the spectator the illusion of traveling, became popular in England and other countries (**1.21**). As elsewhere, in England exhibitors gathered many types of films into a varied program.

Early English films became famous for their imaginative special-effects cinematography. For example, Cecil Hepworth began producing on a small scale in 1899. At first he concentrated on actualities, but he soon directed trick films as well (**1.22**; **Video 1.2**). Hepworth went on to become the most important British producer from 1905 to 1914.

There were other producers scattered around England. The most notable were a small group working around the resort town of Brighton. Chief among them were G. A. Smith and James Williamson, both of whom were still photographers who branched into filmmaking in 1897. Their explorations of editing and special effects influenced filmmakers in other countries.

Williamson's 1900 film *The Big Swallow* is a good example. A man, seen against a blank background, is gesturing angrily because he does not want his picture



Twins' Tea Party

1.20 Paul's *Twins' Tea Party* appealed to audiences by showing two cute toddlers squabbling and then kissing and making up. It was typical of many films of this era: a single shot taken on an open-air stage in direct sunlight, against a neutral backdrop.

View from an Engine Front—Barnstaple

1.21 *View from an Engine Front—Barnstaple*, made by the Warwick Trading Company in 1898, was typical of a popular genre, the phantom ride.

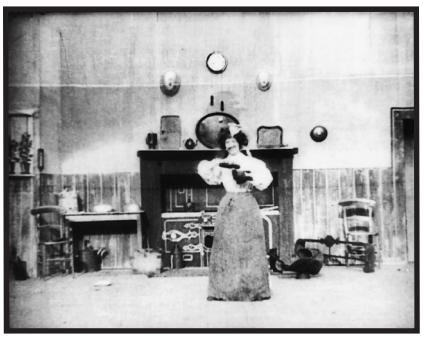
Explosion of a Motor Car

1.22 In Hepworth's *Explosion of a Motor Car* (1900), stop-motion changes a real car into a fake one, which promptly blows up. A passing bobby dutifully inventories the body parts that rain in from above, creating a grim but amusing film.

The Big Swallow

1.23, 1.24 Two stages of Williamson's *The Big Swallow*, as the irritated subject "eats" the cinematographer and camera.

Mary Jane's Mishap



1.25, 1.26 In *Mary Jane's Mishap*, close views alternate with long shots to show such detail as the maid's accidentally smearing a "moustache" on her face while shining some shoes.

taken. He walks forward until his wide-open mouth blots out the view (**1.23**). An imperceptible cut then substitutes a black backdrop for his mouth, and we see the cinematographer and his camera pitch forward into this void. Another concealed cut returns us to the open mouth, and the man backs away from the camera, laughing and chewing triumphantly (**1.24**; **Video 1.2**).

Smith's 1903 grotesque comedy *Mary Jane's Mishap* uses editing in a remarkably sophisticated way. One basic distant framing of a slovenly maid in a kitchen is interrupted by several cut-ins to medium shots that show her amusing facial expressions (**1.25**, **1.26**; **Video 1.2**). Although the actor's position is usually not matched well at the cuts, there is a general attempt to create a continuous action while using closer shots to guide our attention. This principle would become one basis for the dominant continuity style of filmmaking (see Chapter 2).

The English cinema was innovative and internationally popular early in film history, though it would soon weaken in the face of French, Italian, American, and Danish competition.

The United States: Competition and the Resurgence of Edison

The United States was by far the largest market for motion pictures because it had more theaters per capita than any other country. For more than fifteen years, American and foreign firms competed vigorously there. Although American films were sold abroad, US firms concentrated on the domestic market. As a result, France and Italy were soon to move ahead of the United States and control the international film trade until the mid-1910s.

Exhibition Expands After the first New York presentation of Edison's Vitascope in April 1896, film venues spread rapidly across the country. The Vitascope was not for sale, but individual entrepreneurs bought the rights to exploit it in different states. During 1896 and 1897, however, many small companies marketed their own projectors, all designed to show 35 mm prints. Soon hundreds of projectors were in use, and films were shown at vaudeville houses, amusement parks, small storefront theaters, summer resorts, fairs, even churches and opera houses.

Movies were not yet copyrighted and prints were sold rather than rented, so it was difficult to control the circulation of films. Edison's pictures were often duplicated, while Edison profited by duping films imported from France and England. Firms also frequently made direct imitations of each other's movies.

The years from 1895 to 1897 were the novelty period of the cinema because the primary appeal was simply the astonishment of seeing movement and unusual sights reproduced on the screen. By early 1898, however, films' novelty had worn off. As attendance declined, many exhibitors went out of business. One event that helped revive

the industry was the Spanish-American War of 1898. Patriotic fervor made audiences eager to see anything relating to the conflict, and companies in the United States and abroad profited by making both authentic and staged films.

Another type of film that helped revive the industry was the Passion Play. Beginning in 1897, filmmakers made a series of single-shot scenes from Jesus's life—views that resembled illustrations in Bibles or magic-lantern slides. One series of shots was released in February 1898 as *The Passion Play of Oberammergau* (**1.27**). As with many of the more elaborate films of the day, the exhibitor had the option of buying some or all of the shots and combining them, along with lantern slides and other religious material, to make a lengthy program. Prizefight films were also popular, especially because they often could be shown in places where live bouts were prohibited.

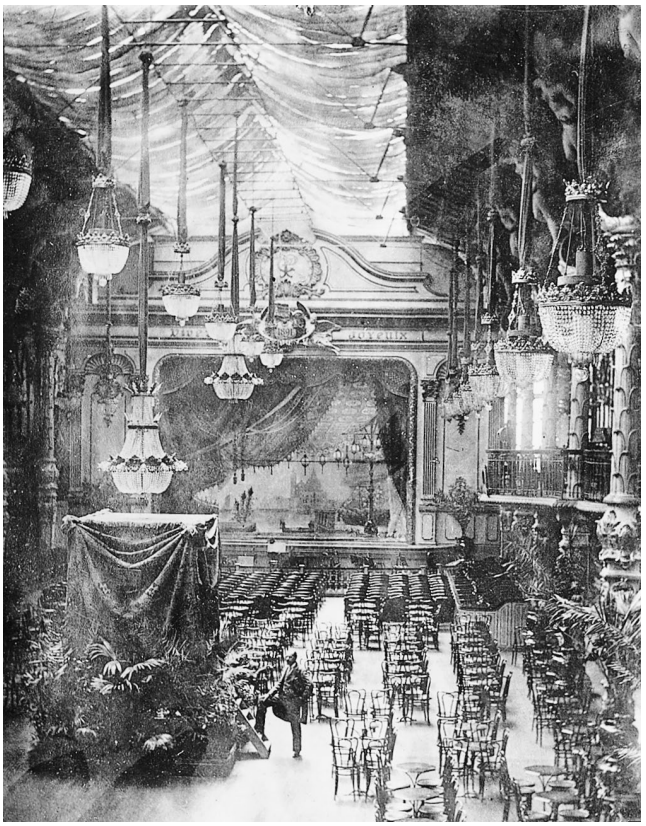
From 1898, then, the American film industry enjoyed a certain stability, with most films being shown in vaudeville theaters. Production increased during this period to meet the high demand.

Growing Rivalry The American Mutoscope Company did particularly well during the late 1890s, partly because of its sharp 70 mm images, displayed by the company's own touring operators in vaudeville houses. By 1897, American Mutoscope was the most popular film company in America, and it attracted audiences abroad as well (**1.28**). American Mutoscope began filming in a new rooftop studio (**1.29**). The firm changed its name in 1899 to American Mutoscope and Biograph (AM&B), reflecting its double specialization in peepshow Mutoscope reels and projected films. Over the next several years, AM&B was hampered by a lawsuit brought against it by Edison, who consistently took competitors to court for infringing patents and copyrights. In 1902, however, AM&B won the suit because its camera used rollers rather than sprocketed gears to move the film. The company's prosperity grew. In 1903, it began to make and sell films in 35 mm rather than 70 mm, a change that boosted sales. Beginning in 1908, it employed one of the most important silent-era directors, D. W. Griffith.

Another important company was American Vitagraph, founded in 1897 by J. Stuart Blackton and Albert E. Smith as an advertising firm. Vitagraph began producing popular films relating to the Spanish-American War. Like other production companies of this period, Vitagraph was threatened with patent- and copyright-infringement lawsuits by Edison, who hoped to control the American market. Vitagraph survived by agreeing to cooperate with Edison, making films for the Edison

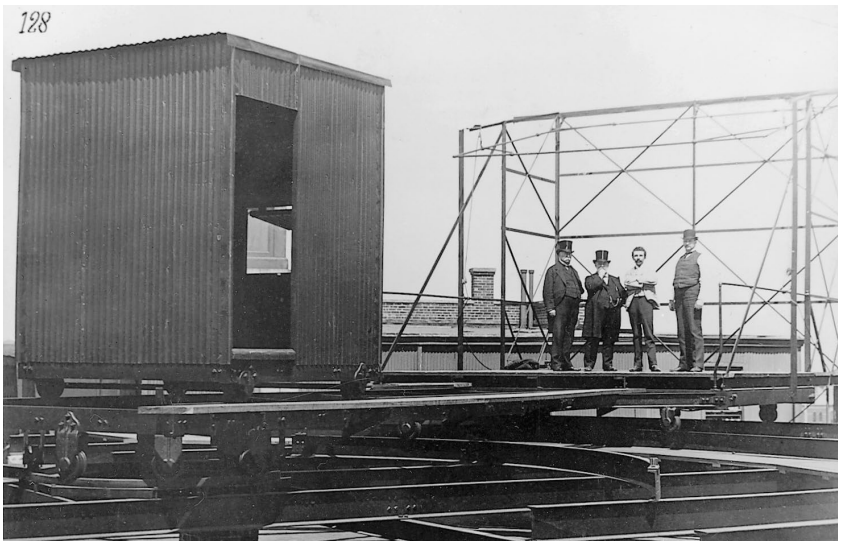
The Passion Play of Oberammergau

1.27 "The Messiah's Entry into Jerusalem," one of the single-shot tableaux that made up *The Passion Play of Oberammergau*, produced by the Eden Musée, an important New York entertainment establishment.



George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

1.28 Eugène Lauste, an American Mutoscope Company employee who had helped invent the Biograph camera, by the camera booth in the Casino de Paris, where he showed films in 1897 and 1898. The hall, with its potted palms and chandeliers, indicates the sort of elegant venue in which some early film screenings were held.



George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

1.29 Officials of the American Mutoscope Company (including W. K. L. Dickson, second from right) in the firm's new rooftop studio. Like the Black Maria, the studio rotated on rails to catch the sun. The camera was sheltered in the metal booth, and simple painted sets were built against the framework.

firm and in turn dealing in Edison films itself. AM&B's 1902 legal triumph over Edison briefly reduced the risk of lawsuits throughout the industry by establishing that Edison's patents did not cover all types of motion-picture equipment (see Chapter 2). As a result, Vitagraph expanded production. Within a few years, it would emerge as an important firm making artistically innovative films. Blackton would also make some of the earliest animated films.

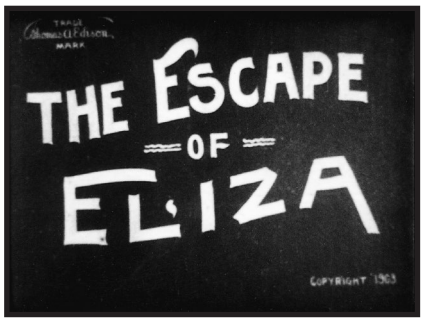
Edwin S. Porter, Edison's Mainstay The rise in production at AM&B and Vitagraph in the wake of Edison's failed lawsuit obliged Edison's company to make more films to counter their competition. One successful tactic was to make longer films shot in the studio. In this endeavor, it had the assistance of the most important American filmmaker of this early period, Edwin S. Porter.

Porter was a film projectionist and an expert at building photographic equipment. In the late 1900s, he went to work for Edison, whom he greatly admired. He was assigned to improve the firm's cameras and projectors. That year the Edison Company built a new glass-enclosed rooftop studio in New York, where films could be shot using the typical painted stage-style scenery of the era. In early 1901, Porter began operating a camera there. At this point in cinema history, the cameraman was also the film's director, and soon Porter was responsible for many of the company's most popular films.

Porter has often been credited with virtually all the innovations of the pre-1908 period, including making the first story film and inventing editing as we know it. In fact, there were hundreds of staged films telling stories at the period, and Porter drew on cutting techniques used by Méliès, Smith, and Williamson. He imaginatively developed his models, however, and he undoubtedly introduced some original devices. His fame came from his position as the foremost filmmaker of the preeminent American production company, so his works were widely seen and imitated.

Porter had access to all the foreign films that the Edison Company was duping, so he could study the latest innovations. He examined Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon* closely and decided to copy its manner of telling a story in a series of shots. From 1902 on, many of his films contained several shots, with significant efforts to match time and space across cuts.

Porter's *Life of an American Fireman* (1903) is a notable attempt at such storytelling. It begins with a long shot of a dozing fireman dreaming of a woman and child threatened by fire; the dream is rendered as a sort of thought balloon, a circular vignette superimposed in the upper part of the screen. A cut to a close-up shows a hand pulling a public fire alarm. Several shots, mixing studio and location filming, show the firemen racing to the scene. The film ends with two lengthy shots that show the same action from two vantage points. In the first shot, a fireman comes in a bedroom window to rescue a mother and then returns to save her baby. In the second shot, we see both rescues again, from a camera position outside the house. To a modern audience, this repetition of events seems strange, but such displays of the same event from different viewpoints were not uncommon in the early cinema. (In Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon*, we see the explorers' capsule



Uncle Tom's Cabin

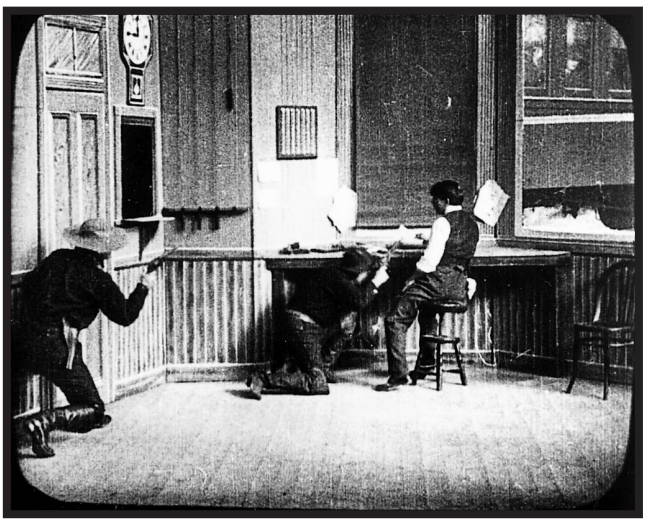
1.30, 1.31 Porter's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* used an intertitle to introduce each shot. Here, "The Escape of Eliza" leads to a single shot of the famous episode in the novel in which Eliza flees across the ice floes on a river.

land in the Man in the Moon's eye [see **1.16**] and then see the landing again from a camera position on the moon's surface.) *Life of an American Fireman* was based on earlier films and lantern slides depicting fire-fighting techniques. Brighton School director James Williamson had made a similar film, *Fire!*, in 1901.

Porter made several significant films in 1903, among them an adaptation of the popular stage version of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Porter's film was a series of one-shot scenes of famous episodes in the novel, linked by printed intertitles—the first known to have been used in an American film (**1.30**, **1.31**). (Porter derived this technique from a G. A. Smith film, and Pathé's *Victimes de l'alcoolisme* of 1902 had used intertitles.)

Porter's most important film, *The Great Train Robbery*, also made in 1903, used eleven shots to tell the story of a gang of bandits who hold up a train. A telegraph operator, whom they tie up at the beginning, alerts authorities, and a posse ambushes the thieves as they divide the loot. After the lengthy robbery scene, the action returns to the telegraph office seen earlier, then moves to a dance hall as the telegraph operator runs in to alert the local townspeople, and finally switches back to the robbers in a forest. Although Porter never cuts repeatedly among these locales, a few years later filmmakers would begin to do so, thus creating a technique called *crosscutting* (see The Beginnings of the Continuity System p. 15). Porter's film was, nonetheless, gripping in its depiction of violent action (**1.32**). Indeed, a novel extra shot, showing one of the robbers in a close view firing a gun toward the camera, was included; exhibitors had the option of placing it at the beginning or end of the film. Perhaps no film of the pre-1905 period was as popular as *The Great Train Robbery* (**Video 1.3**).

Porter worked for Edison for several more years. In 1905, he directed *The Kleptomaniac*, a social critique that contrasted the situations of two women who commit theft. The first part shows a rich kleptomaniac stealing goods at a department store; we then see shots of a poor woman



The Great Train Robbery

1.32 To make this shot for *The Great Train Robbery*, Porter exposed the film twice, showing most of the action of the holdup staged in the studio, with the view of the train as seen through the window filmed separately.

impulsively taking a loaf of bread. The final courtroom scene shows the poor woman being sentenced, while the rich one is let off. In Porter's 1906 film *The Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*, superimposition and a rocking camera depict a drunkard's dizziness while Méliès-style special effects show his dream of flying above a city. In 1909, Porter left Edison to become an independent producer, but he was soon outshone by others just entering the field.

From 1902 to 1905, Porter was one of many filmmakers who contributed to an industrywide concentration on fiction filmmaking. Unlike topicals, which were dependent on unpredictable news events, fiction films could be carefully planned in advance. Scenics involved expensive travel to distant locales, but fiction films allowed their makers to stay at or near the studio. Advance planning and in-house control enabled companies to create films steadily and on schedule. Moreover, audiences seemed to prefer films with stories. Some of these were still one-shot

views, but filmmakers increasingly used a series of shots to depict comic chases, extravagant fantasies, and melodramatic situations.

By 1904, major changes were taking place in the new medium and art form of the cinema. Fiction films were becoming the industry's main product. Increasingly, movies were rented to exhibitors, a practice that established the division among production, distribution, and exhibition that was to shape the expansion of the film industry.

Although the leading industries were in France, England, and the United States, small-scale production also occurred in other parts of the world from an early date. Enterprising exhibitors made scenics and topicals of local interest to mix into their programs of imported films. In Spain, for instance, the first films were taken by Eugène Promio when he brought the Lumière Cinématographe to Madrid in June 1896. By October of the same year, Eduardo Jimeno shot the first Spanish-made film, *Worshippers Leaving the Noon Mass at Pilar de Zaragoza*; similar imitations of Lumière actualities and even fiction films were produced in 1897. In India, exhibitor Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatwadekar ordered a European camera and filmed wrestling matches, circus monkeys, and local events, showing these actualities alongside imported films beginning in 1899. Entrepreneurs in other countries made similar films, but because only one or a few prints were made, hardly any survive.

During the first ten years of the commercial exploitation of the cinema, conditions were established for international growth of the industry. Moreover, filmmakers had begun to explore the creative possibilities of the new medium. These explorations were to intensify over the next decade.

REFERENCE

1. From *The Photogram*, quoted in John Barnes, *The Beginnings of the Cinema in England* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976), p. 64.

CHAPTER 2

The Inherited Taint

THE INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION OF THE CINEMA, 1905–1912

Polidor coi Baffi

Before 1904, the cinema led a somewhat vagrant existence. Producers sold film prints, and exhibitors showed them in vaudeville houses, music halls, rented theaters, and fairground tents. The same prints were often resold and continued to circulate for years, becoming ever more battered. Around 1905, however, the film industry expanded and stabilized. Permanent theaters were devoted especially to film, and production expanded to meet increased demand. Italy and Denmark joined the ranks of important producing countries, and filmmaking on a smaller scale emerged in many other lands.

After 1905, films grew longer, using more shots and telling more complex stories. Filmmakers explored new techniques for conveying narrative information. Perhaps no other era has seen such extensive changes in films' formal and stylistic traits.

FILM PRODUCTION IN EUROPE

France: Pathé versus Gaumont

During this period, the French film industry was still the largest, and its movies were the ones most frequently seen around the world. The two main firms, Pathé Frères and Gaumont, continued to expand, and other companies were formed in response to an increased demand from exhibitors. As in many Western countries, workers were winning a shorter workweek and thus had more leisure time for inexpensive entertainments. The French firms also courted a wider middle-class audience.

From 1905 to 1908, the French film industry grew swiftly. Pathé was already a large company, with three separate studios. It was also one of the earliest film companies to become *vertically integrated*. A vertically

integrated firm is one controlling the production, distribution, and retailing of a product. As we shall see time and again in this book, vertical integration has been a major strategy pursued by film companies and often a measure of their strength. Pathé made its own cameras and projectors, produced films, and around 1911 began manufacturing film stock as well. In 1906, Pathé also started buying theaters. The following year, the firm began to distribute its own films by renting rather than selling them to exhibitors. By then, it was the largest film company in the world. Starting in 1908, it distributed films made by other companies as well.

By 1905, Pathé employed six filmmakers, overseen by Ferdinand Zecca, each making a film a week. The films encompassed a variety of genres: actualities, historical films, trick films, dramas, vaudeville acts, and chases. During 1903 and 1904, Pathé created an elaborate system for hand-stenciling color onto release prints. Stencils were painstakingly cut from a copy of the film itself, with a different stencil for each color. Assembly lines of women workers then painted the colors frame by frame on each release print. Pathé reserved color for trick films and films displaying flowers or elegantly dressed women (**Color Plate 2.1**). Such hand-coloring continued until the early sound era.

In 1908, Pathé launched SCAGL, a unit to produce prestige pictures. It was headed by Albert Capellani, one of the great directors of the pre-World War I era (see D. W. Griffith and Albert Capellani: Two Early Masters of the Cinema p. 40). Among Pathé's most profitable films were series starring popular comics: the "Boireau" series (with André Deed), the "Rigadin" films (with the music-hall star Prince), and, above all, the Max Linder series. Linder's films, set in a middle-class milieu, reflected the industry's growing bid for respectability (**2.1**). Max typically suffered embarrassment in social situations, such as wearing painfully tight shoes to an elegant dinner. He was often thwarted in love; in *Une ruse de mari* ("The Husband's Ruse"), he unsuccessfully tries to commit suicide in various ways. Linder's films were enormously influential. Charles Chaplin once referred to Linder as his "professor" and himself as Linder's "disciple."[1] Linder worked in both the United States and France from 1909 until his death in 1925.

Aside from being a vertically integrated firm, Pathé also used the strategy of *horizontal integration*. This term means that a firm expands within one sector of an industry, as when one film production firm acquires and absorbs another one. Pathé enlarged its production by opening studios in such places as Italy, Russia, and the United States. From 1909 to 1911, its Moscow branch made about half the films produced in Russia.

2.1 Max Linder in *Une ruse de mari* ("The Husband's Ruse," directed by Linder in 1913). Linder's distinctive appearance—elegant clothes, top hat, and dapper moustache—influenced other comics to adopt trademark outfits.

2.2 Alice Guy collaborated with designer Victorin Jasset on *La Naissance, la vie et la mort de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ* ("The Birth, Life, and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ," 1906). This scene of the scourging of Christ indicates the elaborate staging and sets used for some prestige films of this period.

Pathé's main French rival, Gaumont, also expanded rapidly. After finishing its new studio in 1905, the firm took on additional filmmakers. Alice Guy trained this new staff and turned to making longer films herself (**2.2**). Among the new filmmakers was scriptwriter and director Louis Feuillade, who took over the supervision of Gaumont's films when Guy left in 1908. He became one of the silent cinema's most important artists. Feuillade was extraordinarily versatile, making comedies, historical films (see **Color Plate 2.2**), thrillers, and melodramas.

Following Pathé's lead, other companies and entrepreneurs opened film theaters, aiming at affluent consumers. Such theaters often showed longer and more prestigious films. Prosperity in the French industry and in film exports led to the formation of several smaller firms during this period.

The Assassination of The Duc de Guise

2.3, 2.4 The sets and acting in *The Assassination of the Duc de Guise* derived from the theater. Its shots, however, showed characters moving smoothly from one space to another, as when the Duc de Guise walks through a curtained doorway to confront his enemies.

The Fall of Troy

The Big Swallow

2.5, *left* The large sets, crowd scenes, and lavish historical costumes of *The Fall of Troy* were typical of Italian epics.

2.6, *right* French-born clown Ferdinand Guillaume as the popular Polidor in *Polidor coi baffi* ("Polidor's Moustache," 1914).

One of these had a significant impact. As its name suggests, the Film d'Art company, founded in 1908, identified itself with elite tastes. One of its first efforts was *The Assassination of the Duc de Guise* (1908, Charles Le Bargy and André Calmettes). Using stage stars, a script by a famous dramatist, and an original score by composer Camille Saint-Saëns, the film told the story of a famous incident in French history (**2.3**, **2.4**). It was widely shown and had a successful release in the United States. *The Assassination of the Duc de Guise* and similar works created a model of what art films should be like. The Film d'Art company, however, lost money on most of its productions and was sold in 1911.

On the whole, the French industry prospered. From 1907 on, the rental system encouraged the opening of cinema theaters. By 1910, screenings in cafés and traveling *fêtes foraines* had dwindled, and large film theaters were the rule. During the same era, however, French firms were facing challenges in the lucrative American market and would soon lose their dominance over world markets.

Italy: Growth through Spectacle

Italy came somewhat late to the film production scene, but beginning in 1905 its film industry grew rapidly and soon resembled that of France. Although films were produced in several cities, Rome's Cines (founded in 1905) and Turin's Ambrosio (1905) and Itala (1906) soon emerged as the principal companies. The new firms were handicapped by a lack of experienced personnel, and some lured artists away from French firms. As a result, some Italian films were imitations, even remakes, of French movies.

Exhibition also expanded quickly. Italy depended less than other European countries on films being shown in traveling fairs and other temporary venues. Instead, many permanent theaters opened. Thus, in Italy, cinema won respect as a new art form earlier than in other countries. Italian producers moved toward art films at about the same time that Film d'Art was making *The Assassination of the Duc de Guise*. In 1908, the Ambrosio company made *The Last Days of Pompeii*, the first of many adaptations of a famous historical novel. As a result, the Italian cinema became identified with historical spectacle.

By 1910, Italy was probably second only to France in the number of films it sent around the world. Partly because Italian producers catered to permanent film theaters, they were among the first who consistently made films of more than one reel (that is, longer than fifteen minutes). For example, in 1911, a major director of the period, Giovanni Pastrone, made *La caduta di Troia* ("The Fall of Troy"; **2.5**) in three reels. The triumph of this and similar films encouraged Italian producers to make longer, more expensive epics.

Not all Italian films were epics, however. Beginning in 1909, producers imitated the French by creating several

comic series. Itala hired Pathé's actor André Deed, who briefly abandoned his Boireau character to become Cretinetti ("Little Cretin"). Other companies found French or Italian comics to build series around, such as Ambrosio's Robinet and Cines's Polidor (**2.6**). These films were much cheaper than epics. They were also livelier and more spontaneous, and they became internationally popular. Hundreds of such films were made, although the fad gradually declined during the 1910s.

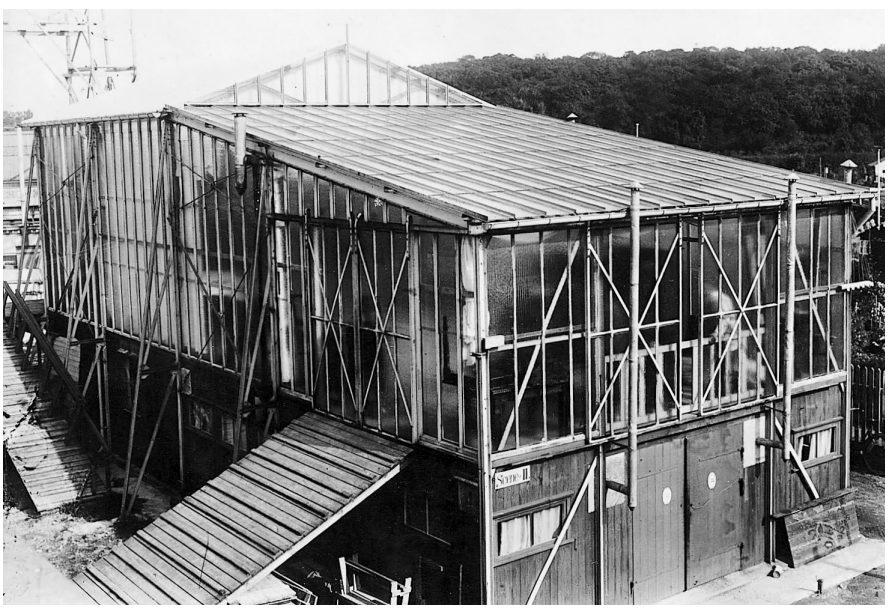
Denmark: Nordisk and Ole Olsen

That a small country like Denmark became a significant player in world cinema was largely due to entrepreneur Ole Olsen. He had been an exhibitor, initially using a peepshow machine and later running one of the first movie theaters in Copenhagen. In 1906, he formed a production company, Nordisk, and immediately began opening distribution offices abroad. Nordisk's breakthrough came in 1907 with *Lion Hunt*, a fiction film about a safari. Because two lions were actually shot during the production, the film was banned in Denmark, but the publicity generated huge sales abroad. The company's New York branch, established in 1908, sold Nordisk films under the brand name Great Northern. In the same year, Olsen completed the first of four glass studios for indoor production (**2.7**).

Nordisk films quickly established an international reputation for excellent acting and production values. Nordisk specialized in crime thrillers and somewhat sensationalistic melodramas, including "white-slave" (prostitution) stories. Olsen had a circus set permanently installed, and some of the firm's major films centered on circus life, such as *The Four Devils* (1911, Robert Dinesen and Alfred Lind) and *Dødsspring til Hest fra Cirkuskuplen* ("Death Jump on Horseback from the Circus Dome," 1912, Eduard Schnedler-Sørensen). The latter film concerns a count who loses his fortune through covering the gambling debts of a friend. His skill at riding horses allows him to work in a circus, where he becomes romantically involved with two women (**2.8**). One of them tries to kill him by causing his horse to plunge from a high platform; the second woman nurses him back to health. Rival producers admired such films for compressing abrupt plot twists and highly emotional situations into two or three reels.

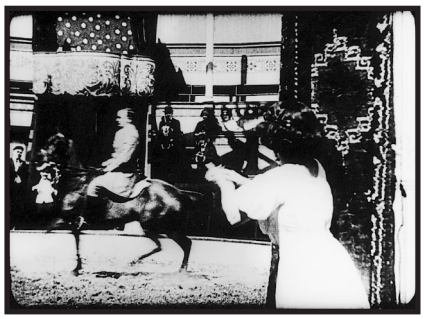
Although a few Danish companies started up during this period, Olsen eventually managed either to buy them or to drive them out of business. Nevertheless, it was one of these short-lived small firms that made *Afgrunden* ("Downfall," 1910, Urban Gad), which brought instant fame to actress Asta Nielsen. Like Max Linder, she was one of the first international film stars. Dark and thin, with large, intense eyes, she possessed an unconventional beauty. She often played women destroyed by love: seduced and abandoned, or sacrificing themselves for the happiness of the men they love (see 2.19–2.21). Nielsen was equally adept at comedy, however, and, although she had trained in the theater, she was one of the earliest screen performers whose style seemed to owe nothing to the stage. Nielsen went on to work in Germany, where she became one of the mainstays of the industry.

The Danish industry remained healthy until World War I cut off many of its export markets.



Det Danske Filmmuseum, Copenhagen.

2.7 Nordisk's second studio was typical of such buildings in many countries during the silent era. Glass walls and roofs permitted sunlight to illuminate scenes.


Dødsspring til Hest fra Cirkus-Kuplen

2.8 A dramatic staging in depth in *Dødsspring til Hest fra Cirkuskuplen*: the heroine watches from the foreground as the hero demonstrates his equestrian skills in the circus ring.

Other Countries

Led by Cecil Hepworth's production company, England remained a significant force in world film markets. Its 1905 film *Rescued by Rover* was one of the biggest international hits of its day. Filmmaking spread to other countries as well. The earliest systematic production in Japan, for example, was launched in 1908. Most films made there were records of kabuki plays, filmed in static long shots. In Germany, a few production companies started up, though the industry did not begin to flourish until 1913. Pathé dominated Russian filmmaking, but several domestic firms also established themselves. In other countries, small production companies appeared, produced a few films, and vanished. None challenged France, Italy, Denmark, and the United States as the ruling industries on the international scene.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE EXPANDING AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY

Today, Hollywood dominates the international market in entertainment media. Before World War I, however, the United States was not yet the world's most economically important country. Great Britain still ruled the waves; its ships carried more goods than did those of any other country, and London was the globe's financial center. It was the Great War that allowed the United States to surpass England and other European countries.

Before the war, American film firms concentrated on the swiftly expanding domestic demand and paid less attention to foreign markets. US companies were still battling among themselves for power in the new industry. Between 1905 and 1912, American producers, distributors, and exhibitors tried to bring some stability to the shifting and confused film business. Only then would they be able to turn greater attention to export.

The Nickelodeon Boom

By 1905, films were screening in most of the available vaudeville houses, local theaters, and other venues. The main trend in the American film industry from 1905 to 1907 was the rapid multiplication of film theaters. These were typically small stores, installed with fewer than two hundred seats. Admission was usually a nickel (hence, the term *nickelodeon*) or a dime for a program running fifteen to sixty minutes. Most nickelodeons had only one projector. During reel changes, a singer might perform a current song, accompanied by lantern slides.

Nickelodeons spread for several reasons. When production companies turned away from actualities toward story films, moviegoing became less a novelty and more a regular entertainment. Shorter workweeks left more leisure time. In addition, producers took to renting rather than selling films. Because exhibitors no longer had to keep running the same films until they made back their purchase price, they could change their programs two, three, even seven times a week. As a result, some of their patrons returned regularly. Nickelodeons could run the same brief programs over and over continuously, from late morning to midnight. Many exhibitors made huge profits.

Nickelodeons had advantages over earlier forms of exhibition. Unlike amusement parks, they were not seasonal. They were cheaper than vaudeville houses and more regularly available than traveling exhibitions. Expenses were low. Spectators typically sat on benches or in simple wooden seats. There were seldom newspaper advertisements to alert patrons in advance concerning programs. Patrons usually either attended on a regular basis or simply dropped in. The front of the theater displayed hand-painted signs with the names of the films, and there might be a phonograph or barker attracting passersby.

There was almost always some sound accompaniment. The exhibitor might lecture along with the film, but piano or phonograph accompaniment was more common. In some cases, actors stood behind the screen and spoke dialogue in synchronization with the action on the screen. More frequently, people used noisemakers to create appropriate sound effects.

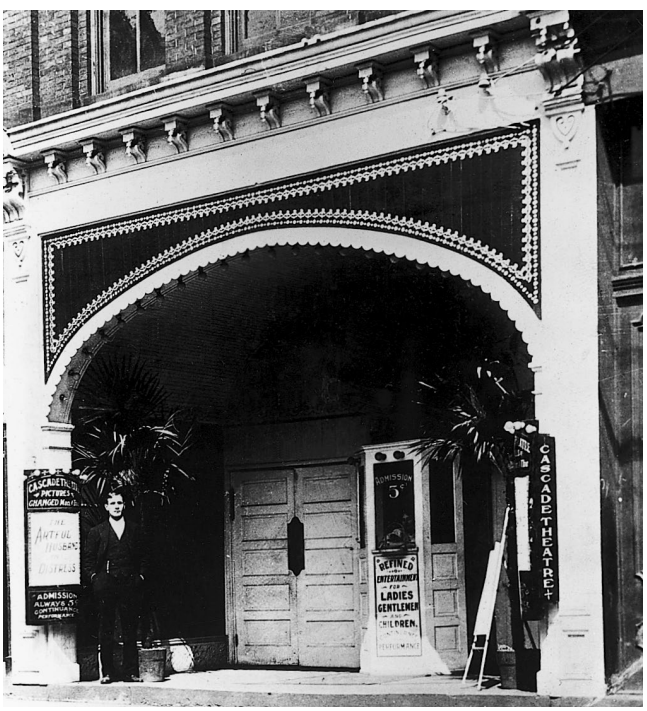
In the days before 1905, when films had mainly been shown in vaudeville theaters or by touring lecturer-exhibitors, admission prices were often twenty-five cents or more—too much for most blue-collar workers. Nickel theaters, however, opened films to a mass audience, many of them immigrants. Nickelodeons clustered in business districts and working-class neighborhoods in cities. Blue-collar workers could attend theaters near their homes, while secretaries and office boys caught a show

during the lunch hour or before taking public transport home after work. Women and children made up a significant proportion of city audiences, stopping in for a break while shopping. In small towns, a nickelodeon might be the only place showing films, and people from all strata of society would watch movies together.

By 1908, nickelodeons had become the main form of exhibition. As a result, many more movies were needed by the new distributors, or *film exchanges*, that bought prints from the producers. A single nickelodeon, using three films in a program that changed three times a week, would rent about 450 titles a year!

During the nickelodeon boom, most films came from abroad. Pathé, Gaumont, Hepworth, Cines, Nordisk, and other European firms flooded the weekly release schedules. Because there were far more theaters in the United States than in any other country, a huge number of copies could be sold to exchanges there. Such sales helped keep the English industry healthy and allowed the Italian and Danish industries to expand quickly.

The nickelodeons also launched the careers of several important businessmen. The Warner brothers got their start as nickelodeon exhibitors (**2.9**). Carl Laemmle, later the founder of Universal, opened his first nickelodeon in Chicago in 1906. Louis B. Mayer, who became the second "M" of MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), had a small theater in Haverhill, Massachusetts. Other studio executives who started out running nickelodeons included Adolph Zukor (later head of Paramount), William Fox (who formed the company that became 20th Century-Fox), and Marcus Loew (whose Loew's was the parent company of MGM). These men would help create the basic structure of the Hollywood studio system during the 1910s.



George Eastman International Museum of Photography, Rochester.

2.9 The Cascade Theater in Newcastle, Pennsylvania was the first nickelodeon acquired by Jack, Albert, Sam, and Harry Warner. A sign promises "Refined Entertainment for Ladies, Gentlemen, and Children." The Warners went on to careers in exhibition and production, eventually establishing Warner Bros.

The Motion Picture Patents Company versus the Independents

In the meantime, however, the nickelodeon boom spurred intense competition. The more established leaders of the industry consolidated power among themselves and tried to exclude newcomers. They realized that control of the burgeoning film business would be highly profitable.

1907–1908: Control through Litigation Since 1897, the Edison company had tried to force its competitors out of business by suing them. Edison claimed to own the basic patents on motion-picture cameras, projectors, and film stock. Some companies, such as Vitagraph, paid Edison a license fee to be able to go on producing. After a court decision went in Edison's favor in 1904, other companies joined in paying such fees. American Mutoscope & Biograph (AM&B), however, refused to cooperate with Edison because its Biograph camera had a different mechanism and separate patents.

In early 1907, an appeals court handed down an important decision. Edison had sued AM&B for infringement of its camera patent. The decision reaffirmed that AM&B's roller-driven camera was sufficiently different and did not infringe Edison's patent, based on sprocket gears. The decision also stated, however, that other camera designs currently in use *did* infringe that patent. As a result, all production companies and importers assumed that they had to pay either AM&B or Edison to stay in business.

The rivalry between Edison and AM&B became more intense in 1908. Edison decided to sue AM&B yet again, this time claiming that the latter had infringed its patents on film stock. AM&B countered by buying the patent for the Latham loop and suing Edison for using this device in its cameras and projectors. The two firms set up rival licensing arrangements in early 1908: members of the Association of Edison Licensees paid Edison in order to go on making films, and the Biograph Association of Licensees collected

money mostly from foreign companies and importers who wanted to bring films into the American market.

The film market approached chaos. Exhibitors needed a great many films, but producers were so busy fighting each other that they could not release enough titles. During this same period, however, Edison and AM&B decided to cooperate. They created a separate company that would control all competitors by owning and charging licensing fees on the key existing patents. In December of 1908, the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC), headed by Edison and AM&B, was created. Several other production companies belonged to the MPPC: Vitagraph, Selig, Essanay, Lubin, and Kalem. To keep operating, each of these had to pay fees to the two main companies (though Vitagraph, which had contributed a patent to the arrangement, got back a portion of the license fees).

In an attempt to gain a larger share of the US market, the MPPC strictly limited the number of foreign firms that could join. Pathé, the largest importer, and Méliès were allowed into the MPPC, as was George Kleine, a major Chicago firm that imported European films by Gaumont and Urban-Eclipse (an English–French company). Several European companies, such as Great Northern (Nordisk) and all Italian firms, were shut out. Although foreign companies continued to operate in the United States, both in the MPPC and as independents, they never regained the large share of the market that they had enjoyed before 1908. France and Italy continued to be the leaders in markets outside the United States until World War I.

The MPPC hoped to control all three phases of the industry: production, distribution, and exhibition. Only licensed companies could make films. Only licensed distribution firms could release them. And all theaters wanting films made by members of the MPPC had to pay a weekly fee for the privilege. Eastman Kodak agreed to sell film stock only to members of the MPPC, and in return they would buy no stock except from Kodak.

This arrangement set the stage for control over the entire US film market by an *oligopoly*. When one company dominates its market, that firm has a monopoly. In an oligopoly, a small number of firms cooperate to control the market and block the entry of new companies. Members of the MPPC's oligopoly tried to eliminate all other firms by threatening to sue for patent infringement. A producer who used a film camera without paying the MPPC risked being taken to court. The same was true for exhibitors because the MPPC claimed to control the patents covering their projectors. By and large, American film production and distribution remain an oligopoly today.

During 1909, the American film industry stabilized somewhat. MPPC members set up a regular schedule of weekly releases. Newer films cost more and declined in value after they had been shown for a while (a situation that has survived to the present in a system of *runs* and *windows*). One reel became the standard film length. Each reel rented for the same price, whatever the film was, because producers viewed films as standard products, like sausages.

1909–1915: The Independents Fight Back Still, the MPPC encountered challenges. Not all producers, distributors, and exhibitors were willing to pay fees to Edison and AM&B. Exhibitors who had purchased their projectors outright were particularly annoyed. It is estimated that about 6,000 theaters agreed to pay the weekly fee, but another 2,000 refused. The unlicensed theaters provided a market that unlicensed producers and distributors could serve. This portion of the industry was soon identified as the *independents*.

In April 1909, the first effective blow against the MPPC was dealt when Carl Laemmle, who ran the largest American distribution firm, turned in his license. He started the Independent Motion Picture (IMP) company, a small firm that would later form the basis for the Universal studio. Within the next few years, more than a dozen other independent companies started up across the country, including Thanhouser, Solax (run by Alice Guy Blaché, formerly of Gaumont in France), and the New York Motion Picture Company (headed by Thomas H. Ince, who would become an important producer). Independent theaters could rent films from the European companies shut out of the MPPC arrangement. Trying to avoid patent-infringement suits by the MPPC, independent companies claimed to be using cameras that employed different mechanisms.

Responding to the independent movement, the MPPC created the General Film Company in 1910 as an attempt to monopolize distribution. The General Film Company was to release all the films made by MPPC producers. The MPPC also hired detectives to gain evidence that producers were using cameras with the Latham loop and other devices patented by the MPPC. Between 1909 and 1911, the MPPC brought lawsuits against nearly all of the independent producers for using patent-infringing cameras. One such suit, against Laemmle's IMP, was based on the Latham-loop patent. In 1912, the courts ruled against the MPPC, on the grounds that the technique of the Latham loop had been anticipated in earlier patents. Consequently, independent companies could use any camera without fearing litigation. This court decision was a severe blow to the MPPC.

Also in 1912, the American government began proceedings against the MPPC as a trust (a group of companies acting in unfair constraint of trade). The case was decided against the MPPC in 1915. By that point, however,

a number of the independent firms had wisely allied themselves with national distributors and opted for the new feature-film format. In contrast, some former members of the MPPC had become victims of mismanagement. As a result, during the early 1910s, several members of the independent sector of the industry began to create the new, more stable oligopoly that would form the Hollywood film industry.

Social Pressures and Self-Censorship

The quick spread of nickelodeons led to social pressures aimed at reforming the cinema. Many religious groups and social workers considered the nickel theaters sinister places where young people could be led astray. The movies were seen as a training ground for prostitution and robbery. French films were criticized for treating adultery in a comic fashion. Violent subject matter such as reenacted executions and murders were common fare early in the nickelodeon boom.

In late 1908, the mayor of New York briefly succeeded in closing down all the city's nickelodeons, and local censorship boards were formed in several towns. A concerned group of New York citizens formed the Board of Censorship in March 1909. This was a private body aimed at improving the movies and thus forestalling the federal government from passing a national censorship law. Producers were to submit films voluntarily, and films that passed could include a notice of approval. As a way of gaining respectability, MPPC members allowed their films to be examined, and they even supported the board financially. This cooperation led the group to change its name to the National Board of Censorship (and, in 1915, to the National Board of Review). Although censorship boards continued to be formed on the municipal and state levels, no national censorship law was—or ever has been—passed. Variants of this policy of voluntary self-censorship have existed in the American film industry ever since.

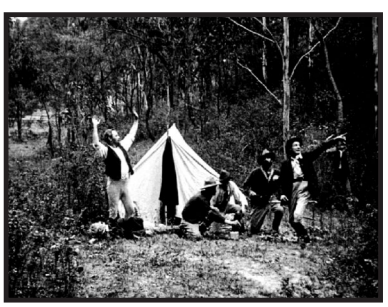
Both the MPPC and the independents also tried to improve the public image of the movies by releasing more prestigious films that would appeal to middle- and upper-class spectators. Films became longer and more complex in their narratives. Stories derived from celebrated literature or portraying important historical events counter-balanced the popular slapstick chases and crime films. Some of these prestigious films, such as *The Assassination of the Duc de Guise* (See France: Pathé versus Gaumont, 2.3–2.4), came from abroad. American producers increasingly turned to similar source material. In 1909, D. W. Griffith, on his way to becoming the most important American silent director, filmed Robert Browning's verse play *Pippa Passes*, quoting lines from the original as intertitles. Adaptations of Shakespeare's plays condensed to one or two reels became common.

Along with this effort to appeal to refined audiences came a change in the places where films were shown. Some nickelodeons continued to operate well into the 1910s, but from 1908 on, exhibitors also began to build or convert larger theaters for showing films. These establishments might charge ten or twenty-five cents, or even more, for longer programs. Some theaters combined films and live vaudeville acts. Popular song slides, which were perceived as lower class, gradually disappeared as the better-class theaters began to use two projectors—and hence had no need for a song to cover the change of reels. Musical accompaniment by orchestras or pipe organs, ornate decorations, and occasional educational lectures accompanying the films were all designed to create an atmosphere very different from that of the nickel movie houses.

The Rise of the Feature Film

Part of the move toward longer programs and more prestigious films involved increasing the length of the films. In the early years of the twentieth century, *feature* simply referred to an unusual film that could be featured in the advertising. During the nickelodeon boom, when the one-reel length became standard, *feature* still had the same meaning. But the term also came to be associated with longer films. Before 1909, these were typically prizefight films or religious epics and were often shown in legitimate theaters rather than nickelodeons. One exception was *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, an Australian narrative film based on the life of the notorious outlaw, Ned Kelly. Released in 1906 and lasting around an hour, it may have been the first feature film in the modern sense (**2.10**).

By 1909, some American producers started making multireel films. Because the MPPC's rigid release system allowed for only single reels, such films had to be released in one part per week. In late 1909 and early 1910, for example, Vitagraph sold *The Life of Moses* as five separate reels. Once all five were out, however, some exhibitors showed them as a single program.



2.10 In *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, the gang captures a police camp and starts to eat, when one of their members alerts them that more police are approaching.

In Europe, the exhibition system was more flexible, and multireel films were common. When these were imported into the United States, they were typically shown in their entirety in legitimate theaters, at higher admission prices. As we saw, Itala's three-reel *The Fall of Troy* (see 2.5) had a great success in 1911. In 1912, Adolph Zukor triumphantly imported *Queen Elizabeth* and *Camille*, French productions starring the famous stage actress Sarah Bernhardt. Such pressure from imports led American firms to release longer films as a unit. In 1911, Vitagraph brought out its three-reel *Vanity Fair* as one film. By the mid-1910s, the feature film would become the standard basis for programming in more prestigious theaters, and the mixture of short films preferred by nickelodeon managers would decline.

The Star System

In the earliest years of the cinema, films were advertised as novelties. Once the nickelodeon boom and the formation of the MPPC had regularized the American industry, companies sold films by brand name. Spectators knew that they were seeing an Edison or a Vitagraph or a Pathé picture, but filmmakers and actors received no screen credit. In vaudeville, the legitimate theater, and the opera, the star system was well established. Film actors' names, however, were not publicized—in part because fame would allow them to demand higher wages.

Indeed, before 1908, few actors worked regularly enough in films to be recognized. At about that time, however, producers started signing actors to longer contracts, and audiences began to see the same faces in film after film. By 1909, viewers were spontaneously asking theater managers the actors' names or writing to the companies for photographs. Fans made up names for the most popular stars: Florence Lawrence, who regularly appeared in Griffith's films, became "the Biograph Girl"; Florence Turner was "the Vitagraph Girl"; and Vitagraph's heartthrob, Maurice Costello, was dubbed "Dimples" (see 2.22). Reviewers picked up these nicknames. Of Griffith's 1909 film *Lady Helen's Escapade*, a commentator remarked, "Of course, the chief honors of the picture are borne by the now famous Biograph girl, who must be gratified by the silent celebrity she has achieved. This lady combines with very great personal attractions very fine dramatic abilities indeed."[2]

By 1910, some companies responded to audience demand and began publicizing their popular actors. Kalem supplied theaters with photographs to display in their lobbies. Personal appearances by stars in theaters became an institution. In 1911, the first fan magazine, *The Motion Picture Story Magazine*, appeared. That same year, an enterprising firm began selling photo postcards of popular players. Stars were named in advertisements aimed at exhibitors (**2.11**). Still, films seldom included credits until 1914.

THE FIRST MAJESTIC
RELEASE WILL BE
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26th
REGULAR SUNDAY RELEASES THEREAFTER
MR. OWEN MOORE
MISS MARY PICKFORD
"The Courting of Mary"
Mischievous Mary and woman-hating Owen, scions of neighboring estates, are brought together in married bliss by the wiles of ever industrious Cupid.
Mary's Uncle, although seemingly severe, has a tenderness for a spinster of interesting, although an uncertain, age. The spinster will not accept Uncle until "that child" is safely married off first. This highly commendable result is finally attained through a chain of ludicrous and entertaining adventures.
The Majestic Motion Picture Co.
TOM D. COCHRANE, General Manager. 145 W. 45th St., NEW YORK CITY
PLACE YOUR ORDER WITH THE MOTION PICTURE DISTRIBUTING & SALES CO.

The Majestic Motion Picture Co

2.11 An advertisement from October 1911 names Owen Moore and Mary Pickford as the stars of an upcoming release by an independent producer, Majestic.

The Movies Move to Hollywood

The first American film companies were located in New Jersey and New York. Other producers emerged in Chicago (Selig, Essanay), Philadelphia (Lubin), and elsewhere in the East and the Midwest. Because filmmakers worked outdoors or in sunlit glass studios, poor weather could hamper production. After the formation of the MPPC in 1908, some film companies sent production units to sunnier climes for the winter: New York–based firms might head to Florida, whereas Chicago companies tended to go west.

During the early 1910s, the Los Angeles area emerged as the country's major production center. It had several advantages. Its clear, dry weather permitted filming outdoors most days of the year. Southern California offered a variety of landscapes, including ocean, desert, mountain, forest, and

hillside. The Western had emerged as one of the most popular American genres, and such films looked more authentic when filmed in the real West rather than in New Jersey.

The small suburb of Hollywood was one of several where studios were established, and its name eventually came to stand for the entire American filmmaking industry—despite the fact that many decisions were still made in New York, in the head offices of the companies. Studios in the Hollywood area would soon grow from small open-air stages to sizable complexes with large enclosed studios and numerous departments.

In 1904, the American film industry had consisted of several small companies trying to put each other out of business. By 1912, it had gone through an unsuccessful attempt by one group, the MPPC, to monopolize the market. Now more film firms existed, and they were on the brink of building the business into something much larger and more stable.

THE BEGINNINGS OF FILM ANIMATION

Films using some aspects of animation existed from the beginnings of the cinema. Émile Reynaud's drawn images for his projecting Praxinoscope were important forerunners for cinematic animation (see Major Precursors of Motion Pictures, 1.4). Quick-draw artists from vaudeville—among them J. Stuart Blackton, one of the founders of Vitagraph—performed in several early films. There is some evidence that in 1890s' advertising films and films made for toy projectors, filmmakers created movement of objects or drawings by photographing them one frame at a time.

Animation within the film industry seems to have begun in 1906, when Blackton made *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* for Vitagraph. It consisted mostly of drawings of faces that developed frame by frame, as Blackton added bits of lines. Thus the drawings gradually appeared but did not move—until the end, when the faces roll their eyes. That same year, Pathé produced *Le Théâtre de Petit Bob* (*Little Bob's Theater*), for which Spanish filmmaker Segundo de Chomón patiently moved objects between single-frame exposures to make the contents of a boy's toybox appear to come to life. Such animation of objects is called *pixilation.*

Creating animated films took a great deal of time and effort. In this early period, they usually were the painstaking creations of individual artists, working alone or with an assistant. Animation involved either making objects seem to move or bringing many separate drawings to life.

The earliest major film animating objects was Vitagraph's *The Haunted Hotel* (1907), directed by Blackton. Here the "magical" movement occurred within a live-action film. A hotel patron is plagued by supernatural forces, rendered onscreen through double exposures, wires, stop motion, and other tricks. In one scene, a knife moves on its own to cut and butter bread (**2.12**). *The Haunted Hotel* was one of the first releases by Vitagraph's new Paris office, and it was widely imitated abroad.

Émile Cohl, who worked primarily for Gaumont from 1908 to 1910, was the first person to devote his energies to drawn animation. His earliest cartoon was *Fantasmagorie* (1908; **2.13**). In order to create steady movement, Cohl placed each drawing on a plate of glass illuminated from beneath and then traced the image onto the next sheet of paper, making slight changes in the figures. His many films were often based on bizarre, stream-of-consciousness transformations of a series of shapes, one into another. Cohl also made live-action films, often incorporating some animated sequences. Like Méliès, Cohl retired from filmmaking in the teens and lived a life of poverty; he died in 1938.

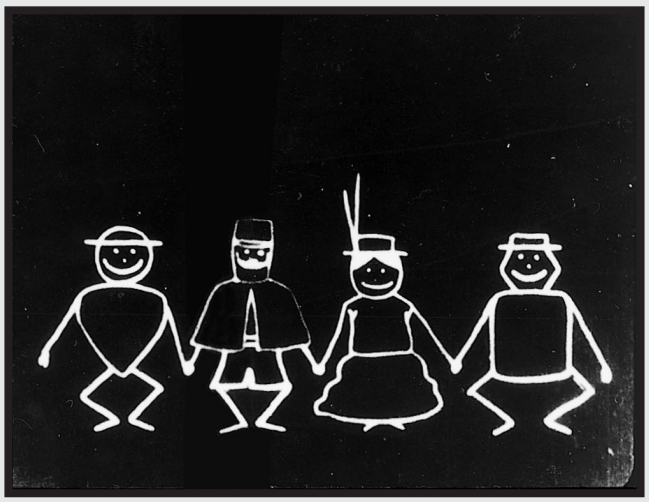
The Haunted Hotel

2.12 In Blackton's *The Haunted Hotel*, a meal prepares itself through frame-by-frame animation.

In the United States, eminent comic-strip artist and vaudevillian Winsor McCay also began making drawn animated films, initially to screen in his stage act. His first film was *Little Nemo* (1911), featuring characters from his famous newspaper strip "Little Nemo in Slumberland" (**2.14**). The film contains a live-action prologue that shows how the enormous number of drawings necessary for the animation were made. McCay released a second cartoon, *The Story of a Mosquito*, in 1912, and a third, *Gertie*, in

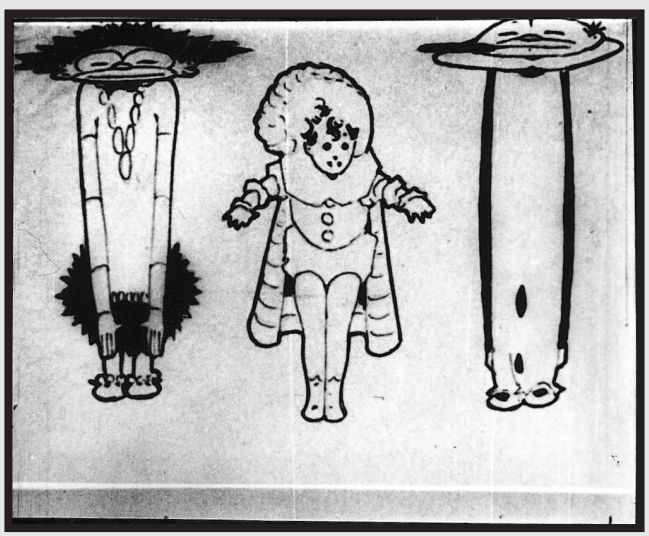
(continued)

THE BEGINNINGS OF FILM ANIMATION, continued



Fantasmagorie

2.13 Cohl's *Fantasmagorie* was drawn in black ink on white paper and then printed in negative to give the impression of moving chalk figures on a blackboard.



Little Nemo

2.14 In *Little Nemo*, the characters move about, but there is no story line. The lack of scenery saved McCay from redrawing the backgrounds on each sheet.

1914. (Modern prints of these films contain live-action shots that McCay added later so that they could be shown without him present.) *Mosquito* and *Gertie* contain sketchy background settings, which an assistant traced on every page. McCay made a few more films, utilizing new labor-saving techniques created after 1912.

In 1910, perhaps the greatest puppet animator of all time began his work. In Russia, Polish director Ladislaw Starewicz made some fiction shorts "acted" by insects.

The Revenge of a Kinematograph Cameraman

2.15 The grasshopper hero of *The Revenge of a Kinematograph Cameraman* films the adulterous activities of a beetle who has insulted him. Later the beetle and his wife see the film in a movie program, whereupon she thrashes him with her umbrella.

The realistic movements in these films baffled audiences and reviewers:

> What is so amazing about this film is that the beetles portray the situation with such plausibility. When angry they shake their feelers and raise their horns, they march just like people.... How is it all done? Not one of the viewers could explain it. If the beetles were performing then their trainer must be a man of magical endurance and patience. That the actors were indeed beetles is clear from careful examination of their appearance.[3]

Like other animators, Starevicz was indeed a man of "magical patience," but he was manipulating plastic puppets with wire joints, changing their positions from frame to frame. His most famous early film is *The Revenge of a Kinematograph Cameraman* (1912; **2.15**). Its witty story and detailed movements of the insect puppets remain engrossing today (**Video 2.1**). Starevicz made many more animated and live-action films in Russia; then he fled to Paris in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. There he remained active until the 1960s.

After 1912, animation was to become a more regular part of filmmaking as labor-saving techniques were invented and patented. The early individual animators largely gave way to staffs of specialists in various phases of the process. Even so, to this day there are still animators who work alone, following the tradition of Cohl, McCay, Starevicz, and others.

THE PROBLEM OF NARRATIVE CLARITY

Beginning in 1904, American commercial filmmaking became increasingly oriented toward storytelling. Moreover, with the new emphasis on one-reel films, narratives became longer and necessitated a series of shots. Filmmakers faced the challenge of making story films that would be comprehensible to audiences. How could techniques of editing, camerawork, acting, and lighting be combined so as to clarify what was happening in a film? How could the spectator grasp where and when the action was occurring?

Early Moves toward Classical Storytelling

Fairly soon, filmmakers solved such problems. Before World War I, films circulated freely among countries, and filmmakers could learn from one another. One filmmaker might borrow a technique from another. Or two filmmakers working independently might happen on the same creative choice, which would reinforce its attractiveness to others.

By 1917, American filmmakers had blended many strategies into a coherent approach to movie storytelling. That approach has come to be called classical Hollywood form and style. From the 1920s onward, most of the world's commercial entertainment films displayed variants of the classical approach.

The basic problem that confronted filmmakers early in the nickelodeon era was that audiences could not understand the causal, spatial, and temporal relations in many films. If the editing abruptly changed locales, the spectator might not grasp where the new action was occurring. An actor's elaborate pantomime might fail to convey the meaning of a crucial action. In a few theaters, a lecturer might explain the plot as the film unrolled, but producers could not rely on such aids.

Filmmakers came to assume that a film should guide the spectator's attention, making every aspect of the story on the screen as clear as possible. In particular, films increasingly set up a chain of narrative causes and effects. One event would plainly lead to an effect, which would in turn cause another effect, and so on. Moreover, an event was typically caused by a character's beliefs or desires. Character psychology had not been particularly important in early films. Slapstick chases or brief melodramas depended more on physical action or familiar situations than on character traits. Increasingly after 1907, however, character psychology motivated actions. By following a series of characters' goals and resulting conflicts, the spectator could comprehend the action.

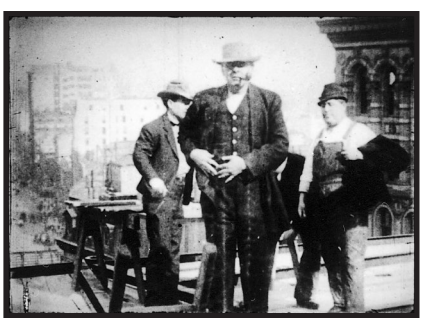
Every aspect of silent film style came to be used to enhance narrative clarity. Staging in depth could show the spatial relationships among elements. Intertitles could add narrative information beyond what the images conveyed. Closer views of the actors could indicate their emotions more precisely. Color, set design, and lighting could imply the time of day and the milieu of the action.

Some of the most important innovations of this period involved the ways in which shots were put together to create a story. In one sense, editing was a boon to the filmmaker, permitting instant movement from one space to another or cuts to closer views to reveal details. But if the spectator could not keep track of the temporal and spatial relations between one shot and the next, editing might lead to confusion. In some cases, intertitles could help establish new locations. Editing also came to emphasize *continuity* among shots. Certain cues indicated that time was flowing uninterruptedly across cuts. Between scenes, other cues might suggest how much time had been skipped over. When a cut moved from one space to another, the director found ways to orient the viewer.

Staging in Depth Filmmakers had been framing action in depth since the earliest years (**2.16**; see **Video 1.1**). Particularly in scenes staged outdoors, an important plot development might be emphasized by having the actor step toward the viewer (**2.17**). In chase films, the pursuers

The Arrival of a Train at la Ciotat Station

2.16 *The Arrival of a Train at la Ciotat Station* (France, 1897): the Lumière cameraman has chosen a vantage point that emphasizes many planes of activity.



The Skyscrapers

2.17 *The Skyscrapers* (United States, 1906): as the foreman steps forward, he discovers that his purse had been stolen.

Le Moulin maudit

2.18 Village dancers in *Le Moulin maudit.*

often ran diagonally from the distance into the foreground. Similarly, Alfred Machin's *Le Moulin maudit* ("The Accursed Mill," Belgium, 1909) shows villagers dancing up to and past the camera along a curved path (**2.18**).

From 1906 or so onward, filmmakers began giving more depth to indoor scenes as well. The results could be quite complex, with figures moving or halting to create vivid compositions and to highlight an actor's gesture or facial expression. In Urban Gad's *Afgrunden* ("Downfall," Denmark, 1910), the heroine's effort to reunite with her fiancé is blocked by her past involvement with a thug. Gad presents the thug's arrival so as to emphasize the fiancé's helpless response (**2.19–2.21**). In such ways, as the drama unfolded moment by moment, depth staging could guide the viewer's eye to the most important parts of the action.

Intertitles Before 1905, most films had no intertitles. Their main titles often gave information concerning the basic situations in the simple narratives to come. In 1904, for example, the Lubin company released *A Policeman's Love Affair*, a six-shot comedy about a rich woman who catches a policeman wooing her maid and throws a bucket of water on him. In Chapter 1, we saw that Edwin S. Porter's 1903 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* used a separate intertitle to introduce the situation of each shot (see 1.30, 1.31). The longer film length standardized during the nickelodeon era led to an increasing number of intertitles.

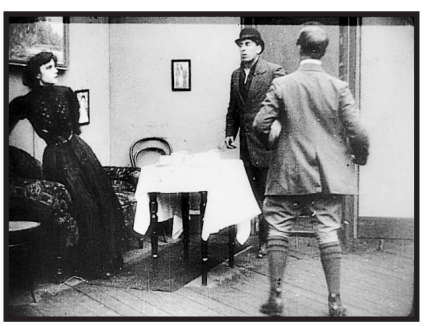
There were two types of intertitles. *Expository titles* were initially more common. Their texts were written in the third person, summarizing the upcoming action or simply setting up the situation. A typical one-reeler of 1911, *Her Mother's Fiancé* (made by Yankee, a small independent), introduced one scene with this title: "Home from School. The Widow's daughter comes home unexpectedly and surprises her mother." Other expository intertitles were more laconic, like the chapter titles in a book. In a 1911 Vitagraph film, *The Inherited Taint*, a scene begins with the title "An engagement broken." Intertitles could also signal time gaps between scenes as in "The following day" and "One month later."

Filmmakers also sought a type of intertitle that could convey narrative information less baldly. Information presented in *dialogue titles* came from within the story action.

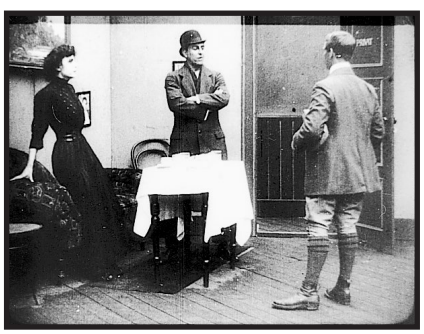
Moreover, because films increasingly focused on character psychology, dialogue titles could suggest characters' thoughts more precisely than gestures could. At first filmmakers were not quite sure where to insert dialogue titles. Some put the title before the shot in which the character delivered the line. Other filmmakers placed the dialogue title in the middle of the shot, just after the character had begun to speak. The latter placement became the norm by 1914, as filmmakers realized that the spectator could better understand the scene if the title closely coincided with the speech in the image.

Afgrunden

2.19 In *Afgrunden*, the lovers are interrupted by the thug.


Afgrunden

2.20 The fiancé moves away, leaving the heroine unprotected. By making him turn from us, Gad forces us to pay more attention to her and her former lover.


Afgrunden

2.21 The thug moves to frame center, balancing the composition and asserting his control of the situation.

Camera Position and Acting Decisions about where to place the camera were important for ensuring that the action would be comprehensible to the viewer. The edges of the image created a frame around the events depicted. Objects or figures at the center tended to be more noticeable.

Methods of framing the action changed after 1908. In order to convey the psychology of the characters, for example, filmmakers began to put the camera slightly closer to the actors so that their facial expressions would be more visible. This trend seems to have started about 1909, when the *9-foot line* was introduced. This meant that the camera, instead of being 12 or 16 feet back and showing the actors from head to toe, was placed only 9 feet away, cutting off the actors just below the hips. Some reviewers complained that this looked unnatural and inartistic, but others praised the acting in films by Vitagraph, which pioneered this technique.

In Vitagraph's *The Inherited Taint* (1911), for example, the young hero belongs to a family with a history of alcoholism. In one scene, he sits at a table in the foreground and orders his servant to bring in some liquor. The camera is close enough to both actors for us to see their faces clearly (**2.22**). After the servant exits, we watch the hero become inebriated. During the early teens, conventional pantomime gestures continued to be used but were more restrained and were increasingly used in combination with facial expressions.

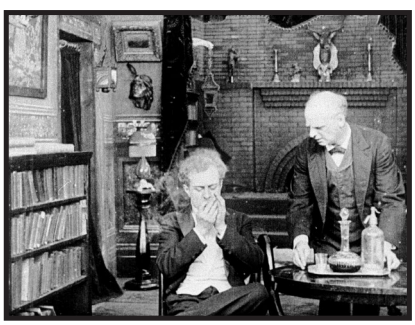
Another technique of framing that changed during this period was the use of high and low camera angles. In early fiction films, the camera usually viewed the action at a level angle, about chest- or waist-high. By about 1911, however, filmmakers began occasionally to frame the action from slightly above or below when doing so provided a more effective vantage point on the scene (**2.23**).

During these same years, camera tripods with swiveling heads were introduced. With such tripods, the camera could be turned from side to side to make *pan* shots or swiveled up and down to create *tilts*. Tilts and pans were often used to make slight adjustments, or *reframings*, when the figures moved about. This ability to keep the action centered enhanced the comprehensibility of scenes.

Color Although most of the prints of silent films that we see today are black and white, many were colored in some fashion when they first appeared. Two techniques for color release prints became common. *Tinting* involved dipping an already-developed positive print into a dye bath that colored the lighter portions of the images while the dark ones remained black. In *toning*, the already-developed positive print was placed in a different chemical solution that saturated the dark areas of the frame while the lighter areas remained nearly white.

Why add an overall color to the images? Color could provide information about the narrative situation and hence make the story clearer to the spectator. Vitagraph's *Jepthah's Daughter* uses tinting for a miracle scene; the pink color suggests fire (**Color Plate 2.2**). Blue tinting was frequently used to indicate night scenes (**Color Plate 2.3**). Amber tints were common for night interiors, green for scenes in nature, and so on. Similar color codes held for toning. For ordinary daylight scenes, toning in sepia or purple was typical (**Color Plate 2.4**). Color was also used to enhance realism. After Pathé introduced its stencil system, other companies applied similar techniques (**Color Plate 2.5**).

Set Design and Lighting Between 1905 and 1912, as production companies were making more money from their films, some built larger studio buildings to replace the earlier open-air stages and cramped interior studios. Most of these had glass walls to admit sunlight (2.7) but also included some type of electric lighting. As a result, many films used deeper, more three-dimensional settings, and some used artificial light.

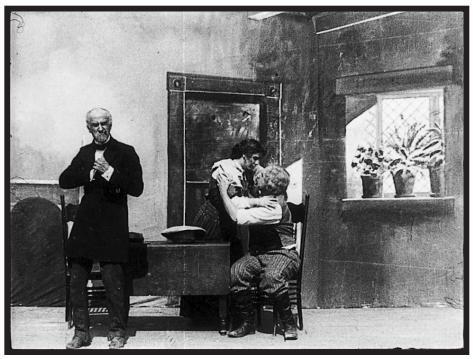


The Inherited Taint

A Tale of Two Cities

2.22, *left* In *The Inherited Taint*, the servant's expression conveys his concern as his master (Maurice Costello) prepares to drink for the first time.

2.23, *right* A camera framing from a slightly high angle enhances the drama and spatial depth of the final guillotine scene in Vitagraph's 1911 three-reel feature *A Tale of Two Cities.*



2.24 In this scene from *The 100-to-One Shot* (1906, Vitagraph), the table and chairs are real, but the fireplace, wall, door frame, window, flowerpots—even the sunlight coming in through the window—are painted on a backdrop. Note also the stark shadows cast on the floor by the sunlight used to illuminate the scene.

2.25 In *Shamus O'Brien* (1912, IMP), much of the scene is dark, while an arc lamp low and offscreen right simulates the light from a fire. (Contrast the set design and lighting of this scene with those of **2.24**.)

At the beginning of the nickelodeon era, many fiction films were still using painted theatrical-style backdrops, or flats, with some real furniture or props mixed in (**2.24**; see also 1.15, 1.25, 1.32, 2.27). Over the next several years, however, more three-dimensional sets, without painted furniture, windows, and so on, came into use (see 2.5, 2.29, 2.39). The set in *The Lonely Villa* (see 2.45), with its two sidewalls, gives a greater sense of depth than does the set in *The 100-to-One Shot*.

Most lighting in early films was even and flat, provided by sunshine or banks of electric lights (see 2.21, 2.24, and 2.27). During this era, however, filmmakers sometimes used a single arc lamp to cast a strong light from one direction. Such lamps could be placed in a fireplace to suggest a fire (**2.25**). The control of artificial studio lighting would be an important development in American film style of the late 1910s.

By 1912, American filmmakers had established many basic techniques for telling a clear story. Spectators could usually see the characters clearly and understand where they were in relation to each other, what they could see, and what they were saying. These techniques would be elaborated and polished over the next decade, until the Hollywood narrative system was sophisticated indeed.

The Beginnings of the Continuity System When editing links a series of shots, narrative clarity will be enhanced if the spectator understands how the shots relate to each other in space and time. Is time continuing uninterruptedly, or has some time been skipped (creating an ellipsis)? Are we still seeing the same space, or has the scene shifted to a new locale? As Alfred Capus, a scriptwriter for the French firm Film d'Art, put it in 1908, "If we wish to retain the attention of the public, we have to maintain unbroken connection with each preceding [shot]."[4] From about 1906 onward, filmmakers developed techniques for maintaining this "unbroken connection." By 1917, these techniques would come together in the *continuity system* of editing. This system involved three basic ways of joining shots: *crosscutting*, *analytical editing*, and *contiguity editing*.

Crosscutting Before 1906, narrative films did not move back and forth between actions in separate spaces. In most cases, one continuous action formed the whole story. The popular chase genre provides the best example. Here, an event triggers the chase, and the characters keep running through one shot after another until the culprit is caught. If a narrative involved several actions, the film would concentrate on one in its entirety and then move on to the next.

One of the earliest known cases where the action cuts back and forth between locales, with at least two shots in each place, occurs in *The 100-to-One Shot* (1906, Vitagraph). The situation is a last-minute race to pay the mortgage before the landlord evicts a family. The last four shots show the hero speeding toward and arriving at the house:

Shot 29 A street, with a car driving forward.

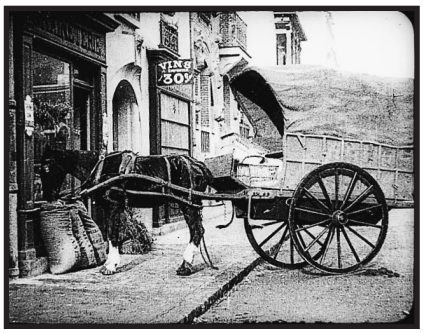
Shot 30 Inside the house, the landlord starts to force the old father to leave.

Shot 31 The street in front of the house, with the hero pulling up in the car.

Shot 32 Inside the house, the hero pays the landlord and tears up the eviction notice. General rejoicing.

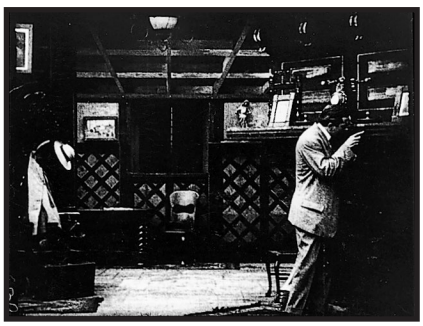
Presumably the filmmakers hoped that when cutting moved back and forth between two different spaces, the

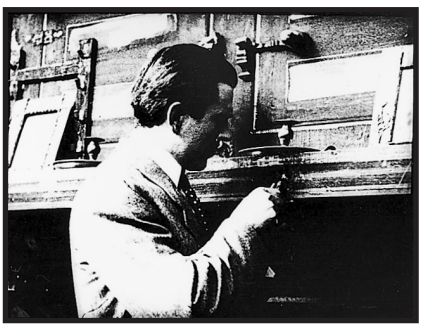
The Runaway Horse



2.26–2.28 Crosscutting in *The Runaway Horse* allowed the filmmakers to give the impression that the horse grows healthy and fat by eating a whole bag of oats.

After One Hundred Years





2.29, 2.30 In *After One Hundred Years* (1911, Selig), a cut-in to a closer view shows a man discovering a bullet hole in a mantelpiece, a detail that would not be visible in the distant framing.

spectator would understand that the actions were taking place simultaneously.

Early crosscutting (also known as *parallel editing* and *intercutting*) could be used for actions other than rescues. French films, especially Pathé's, were influential in developing this technique. A clever chase film of 1907, *The Runaway Horse*, for example, shows a cart horse eating a bag of oats outside a shop while his driver delivers laundry inside an apartment building. In the first shot, the horse is scrawny and the bag full (**2.26**). In the next shot, we see the driver inside the building (**2.27**). Four more shots of the horse are interspersed with six of the driver inside. The filmmakers substituted successively more robust animals, so the cart horse seems to get fatter as the sack empties (**2.28**). By the end of the scene, the horse is very lively, and a chase ensues.

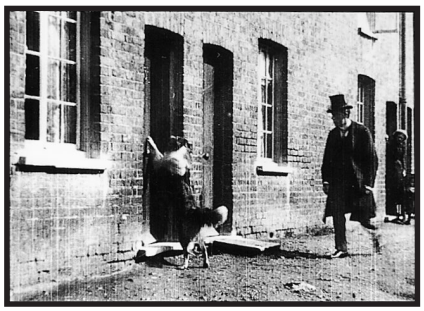
Analytical Editing This term refers to editing that breaks down a single space into separate areas. One simple way of doing this is to cut in closer to the action. Thus, a long shot shows the entire space, and a closer one enlarges small objects or facial expressions. Cut-ins in the period before 1905 were rare (see 1.25, 1.26).

During the nickelodeon era, filmmakers began inserting closer views into the middles of scenes. Often these were notes, newspapers, or photographs that the characters examined. These were called *inserts* and were usually seen from a character's point of view. They helped make the action comprehensible to the viewer.

Between 1907 and 1911, simple cut-ins to small gestures or objects were occasionally used (**2.29**, **2.30**). Cut-ins did not become common until the mid-1910s, however. As we shall see in Chapter 3, longer features led to longer individual scenes, with filmmakers cutting more freely within a single space.

Contiguity Editing In some scenes, characters move out of the space of one shot and reappear in a nearby locale. Such movements were crucial to the chase genre. Typically, a group of characters would run through the shot and then out of sight; the film would then cut to an adjacent area, where the process would be repeated as they ran through again. A series of such shots made up most of the film. A similar pattern occurs in an early model of clear storytelling, *Rescued by Rover* (produced in 1905 by Cecil Hepworth in England, and probably directed by Lewin Fitzhamon). After a baby is kidnapped, the family dog races from the house and through the town, finds the baby, runs back to fetch the father, and leads him to the kidnapper's lair. In all the shots of Rover running toward

Rescued by Rover



2.31, 2.32 *Rescued by Rover*: running consistently toward the left foreground, Rover leads his master through a clearly defined series of contiguous spaces to reach the kidnapper's hideout.

Alma's Champion

2.33, 2.34 In *Alma's Champion* (1912, Vitagraph), the first shot shows the hero exiting leftward. In the next shot, he moves into a nearby space along the tracks. His continued leftward movement, plus the presence of the train in the background, helps the spectator understand where the actions are taking place.

the lair, the dog moves forward through the space of one shot, exits to the left of the camera, and comes into the space of the next shot, still running forward and exiting left (**2.31**, **2.32**).

Not all films of this early period show the characters moving in consistent directions in the nearby spaces. By the teens, however, many filmmakers seem to have realized that keeping the direction of movement constant helped the audience keep track of spatial relations. In 1911, a reviewer complained about inconsistencies:

> Attention has been called frequently in *Mirror* film reviews to apparent errors of direction or management as to exits and entrances in motion picture production.... A player will be seen leaving a room or locality in a certain direction, and in the very next connecting [shot], a sixteenth of a second later, he will enter in exactly the opposite direction.... Any one who has watched pictures knows how often his sense of reality has been shocked by this very thing. To him it is as if the player had turned abruptly around in a fraction of a second and was moving the other way.[5]

Within the next few years, filmmakers more consistently kept characters moving in the same direction (**2.33**, **2.34**).

As we shall see, during the mid-1910s the idea of keeping screen direction consistent became an implicit rule in Hollywood-style editing. So important is this rule that the Hollywood approach to editing is also termed the *180-degree system*, meaning that the camera should stay within a semicircle on one side of the action in order to maintain consistent screen direction.

Another way of indicating that two contiguous spaces are near each other is to show a character looking offscreen in one direction and then cut to what that character sees. In the earliest cases where characters' viewpoints were used to motivate a cut, we would see exactly what the character saw, from his or her optical *point of view*. The earliest point-of-view shots simulated views through microscopes, telescopes, and binoculars to show that we are seeing what characters see (**2.35**, **2.36**). By the early teens, a new type of point-of-view shot was becoming common. A character simply looks offscreen, and we know from the camera's position in the second shot that we are seeing what the character sees (**2.37**, **2.38**).

The second shot might, however, reveal what the character is looking at but not show it from his or her exact point of view. Such a cut is called an *eyeline match.* This device was an excellent way of showing that one space was near another, thus clarifying the dramatic action. During the early 1910s, the eyeline match became a standard way to link shots. The eyeline match also depended on the 180-degree rule. For example, if a character glances off to the right, he or she is assumed to be offscreen left in the next shot (**2.39**, **2.40**).

At about the same time that the eyeline match came into occasional use, filmmakers also used a double eyeline

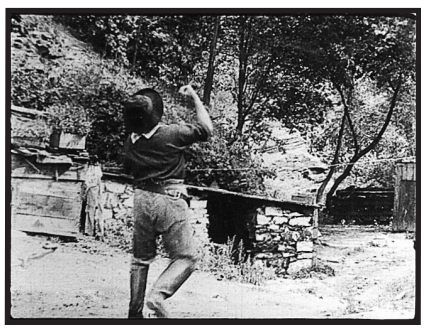
The Scholar's Breakfast

2.35, 2.36 In the 1905 Pathé comedy *The Scholar's Breakfast*, a shot of the scientist looking through his microscope leads to a point-of-view shot.

A Friendly Marriage

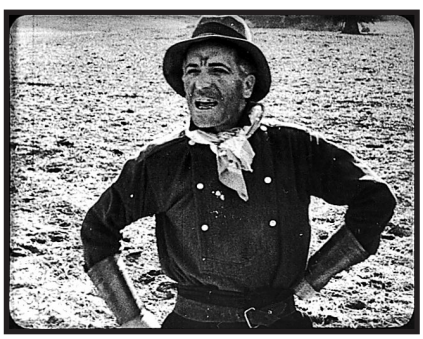
2.37, 2.38 Two shots from *A Friendly Marriage* (1911, Vitagraph). After the wife looks offscreen in the first shot, we understand that the framing through the window in the second represents her point of view.

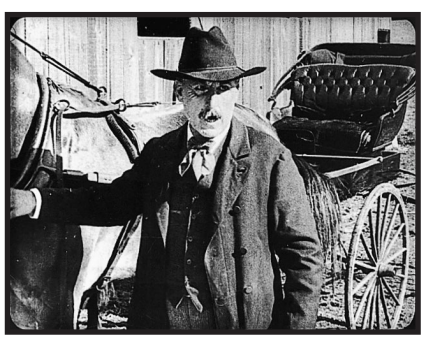
The Gambler's Charm



2.39, 2.40 In *The Gambler's Charm* (1910, Lubin), the gambler shoots through the door of a bar. He and the other characters look off toward the right, and in the second shot it is clear that they are looking offscreen left at the wounded man.

The Loafer





2.41, 2.42 In *The Loafer* (1911, Essanay), two characters argue in a field. The cutting employs a shot/reverse-shot technique: one character looks off left, shouting at the other, and then we see his opponent reacting, looking off right.

match: one character looking offscreen and then a cut to another character looking in the opposite direction at the first. This type of cutting, with some further elaboration, has come to be known as the *shot/reverse shot.* It is used in conversations, fights, and other situations in which characters interact with each other. One of the earliest known shot/reverse shots occurs in an Essanay Western (**2.41**, **2.42**). The shot/reverse-shot technique became more common over the next decade. Today it remains the principal way of constructing conversation scenes.

D. W. GRIFFITH AND ALBERT CAPELLANI: TWO EARLY MASTERS OF THE CINEMA

Albert Capellani and D. W. Griffith came to filmmaking in the early years of the nickelodeon boom, when films were one reel long and relatively simple in form and style. Both were drawn to melodrama and historical epics, but their approaches varied. Griffith's reliance on editing typified a style developing among American directors. Like most Europeans, however, Capellani largely avoided cutting. He relied on prolonged, fairly distant shots with actions precisely staged in depth.

After working as a minor stage and film actor, Griffith started directing films at AM&B in 1908. He soon began crosscutting scenes and framing his actors more closely in original ways. Despite the fact that filmmakers were not credited, viewers soon recognized that films from American Biograph (the name the company assumed in 1909) were consistently among the best coming from the US studios.

Griffith is the early director most often associated with the development of crosscutting (see "Notes and Queries" online). He was influenced by earlier films, including *The Runaway Horse* (see 2.26–2.28), but of all directors of the period, he explored the possibilities of crosscutting most daringly. An extended and suspenseful early use of this technique came in *The Lonely Villa* (1909), where thieves lure a man away from his isolated country home by sending a false message. To maximize suspense, Griffith cuts among three story elements: the man, the thieves, and the family inside the house. Having car trouble, the man calls home and learns that the thieves are breaking into a room where his wife and daughters are barricaded. He hires a wagon, and the shots continue to connect the husband's rescue attempt, the thieves, and the terrified family (**2.43–2.45**). In fewer than fifteen minutes, *The Lonely Villa* presents more than fifty shots, most of which are linked by crosscutting (**Video 2.2**). A contemporary reviewer described the electrifying effect of the film's climax:

> "Thank God, they're saved!" said a woman behind us at the conclusion of the Biograph film bearing the above name. Just like this woman, the entire audience were in a state of intense excitement as this picture was being shown. And no wonder, for it is one of the most adroitly managed bits of bloodless film drama that we have seen.[6]

Although not all of Griffith's subsequent films involved last-minute rescues, he exploited crosscutting often enough to popularize the technique and to have a long-lasting impact on filmmaking.

Griffith also explored the possibilities of framing his actors more closely than the standard 9-foot line had permitted. He wanted to replace the typical pantomimic gestures of the era with a more subtle acting style. In early 1912, Griffith began training his talented group of young actresses, including Lillian Gish, Blanche Sweet, Mae Marsh, and Mary Pickford, to register a lengthy series of emotions using only slight gestures and facial changes. One result of these experiments was *The Painted Lady* (1912), a tragic story of a shy young woman who is courted by a man who turns out to be a thief. After she shoots him during a robbery attempt, she goes mad and relives their romance in fantasy. Throughout much of *The Painted Lady*, Griffith places the camera relatively close to the heroine, framing her from the waist up so that her slightest expressions and movements are visible (**2.46**). Griffith also employed analytical editing within scenes, including still closer views of actors' faces. In Chapter 3, we shall look at his feature-length films from the 1910s.

The Lonely Villa

2.43–2.45 Successive shots from near the end of the crosscut rescue scene in *The Lonely Villa* show simultaneous action in three locales.

The Painted Lady

2.46 Griffith's *The Painted Lady* was an early instance of a film that concentrated on the virtuoso acting of its star, Blanche Sweet. Here, she portrays the heroine's madness.

L'Assommoir

2.47 The opening of the engagement-party scene in *L'Assommoir*, with Virginie watching the guests from the middle ground and Lantier at the right foreground gesturing angrily.

L'Assommoir

2.48 As Gervaise reaches the foreground and Copeau approaches, Virginie speaks to Gervaise. The guests' movements are glimpsed behind them (*L'Assommoir*).

L'Assommoir

2.49 Gervaise sits down, an organ-grinder enters from off right, and the guests begin to dance (*L'Assommoir*).

Albert Capellani never went far in crosscutting or breaking down scenes into closer framings. Instead, his strengths lay in lengthy takes, an intricate, detailed staging of scenes, and the realism of his sets and locations. Capellani's actors, often including his gifted brother Paul, perform at a level outstanding for the era.

Capellani was hired by Pathé around 1905, and his earliest identified films were made that year. He continued making short films in various genres until 1908, when Pathé formed its prestige unit, SCAGL, and appointed Capellani to run it. Increasingly, his own projects were adaptations of respected French literary works by Emile Zola, Victor Hugo, and Alexandre Dumas, as well as subject matter drawn from French history.

His first great film, *L'Assommoir* (1909), was an adaptation of Zola's naturalistic novel about poverty and alcoholism in working-class Paris. (The title is an untranslatable pun on, roughly, "knocked-out" and "cheap tavern.") It is full of lengthy takes with complex choreography. In all his films, Capellani gave exact movements and business to each actor present, no matter how insignificant. Their faces, stances, and gestures, often fairly broad, make up for the almost entire lack of closer shots. Take the scene in which the heroine Gervaise and her new fiancé Copeau celebrate their engagement in an open-air café. The proceedings are interrupted at intervals by Gervaise's former lover Lantier and the vengeful Virginie, with whom Lantier has taken up. The entire scene consists of a single two-minute shot, with the fluid action moving forward and back, in and out.

The scene begins with the arrival of Gervaise, Copeau, and their guests in the far distance, with Virginie and Gervaise's jealous ex-lover Lantier awaiting them in the foreground (**2.47**). The guests come forward, and Virginie speaks to Gervaise (**2.48**). An organ-grinder appears, and the guests begin to dance (**2.49**). The scene continues as the dancers move off left and Virginie gets Copeau to dance with her. They and the organ-grinder also go out left, leaving Gervaise alone. In a comic touch, a friend of hers who is always eating comes in and says something to her. When he leaves, Lantier enters from the right and berates Gervaise until another guest drives him away. The dancers return, and the scene ends with Gervaise sitting disconsolately while Virginie and Lantier stand at the far right of the frame, watching her menacingly. As this and other lengthy scenes in *L'Assommoir* show, Capellani instructed all of his actors, even minor ones milling about in the backgrounds, on facial expressions and gestures (**Video 2.3**). The resulting action is livelier and often more comprehensible than in many films of the day.

(continued)

D. W. GRIFFITH AND ALBERT CAPELLANI: TWO EARLY MASTERS OF THE CINEMA, continued

L'homme aux gants blancs.

2.50 A rare cut-in in *L'homme aux gants blancs*. The gloves will later be lost, found by a thief, and deliberately dropped beside the body of a woman whom the thief kills. The seamstress' identification of the repaired glove leads to the arrest of the wrong man.

Germinal

2.51 Two of the main characters seen against a real mining town filmed for *Germinal*.

Such care with the performances meant that Capellani seldom needed to cut within scenes. When he did, it was usually not to show an actor's face but to allow the spectator to see a small detail crucial to the action. In *L'homme aux gants blancs* ("The Man with White Gloves," 1908), he cuts to a medium close-up of a milliner fixing a loose button on a pair of gloves the hero is buying (**2.50**). We need to see this action clearly because it will later be important in the plot.

Capellani's films are also notable for their realistic settings, whether filmed in the studio or on location. These prestige films warranted higher budgets for building interiors, and he was able to work in historic buildings in Paris and environs for his films set during the French Revolution and other eras. He sought equal naturalism for the settings needed for his Zola adaptations, as with his treatment of the mine and its surroundings in *Germinal* (1913, **2.51**).

Each in his own way, these two directors brought an exceptional sophistication to the films they made very early in the history of the cinema. Their approaches typified stylistic differences between American and European directors that would continue throughout most of the 1910s.

AN INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Many film techniques were used in similar ways internationally. French, Italian, Danish, English, and American films and, to a lesser extent, films of other countries circulated widely outside their home countries. Two examples from very different places should suffice to suggest how widely some techniques were disseminated.

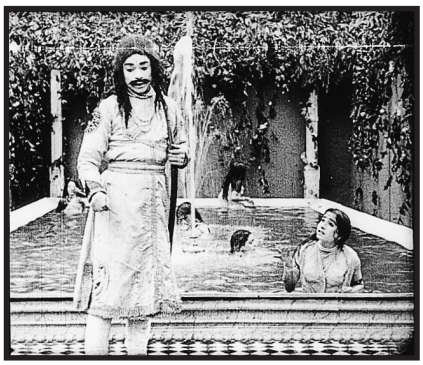
The chase film, so typical of the years from 1904 to 1908, was an international genre. In the Netherlands, where production was miniscule, a chase film called *De Mesavonture van een fransch Heertje zonder Pantalon aan het Strand te Zandvoort* ("The Misadventures of a Frenchman without Pants on the Beach of Zandvoort," c. 1905, Alberts Frères) followed a comic formula: a man falls asleep on the beach, the tide rises to wet his trousers, he removes them, and indignant bystanders and police chase him through a series of adjacent locales (**2.52**, **2.53**).

The early techniques of continuity developed later in this period also proved widely influential. The earliest Indian fiction feature film, *Raja Harishchandra*, was made in 1912 and released in 1913; its director was the first major Indian filmmaker, D. G. Phalke. Like many later Indian films, its subject matter was derived from traditional mythology. Only the first and last of the film's four reels survive, but they indicate that Phalke had grasped the 9-foot line, contiguity cutting, and other current principles of Western filmmaking (**2.54–2.56**).

After 1912, filmmakers continued to explore techniques for telling stories clearly. But World War I interrupted the international circulation of films, and some nations developed distinctive film styles.

De Mesavonture van een fransch Heertje zonder Pantalon aan het Strand te Zandvoort

2.52, 2.53 In *De Mesavonture van een fransch Heertje zonder Pantalon aan het Strand te Zandvoort*, a pair of shots show the unfortunate hero being chased along the beach.


Raja Harishchandra

2.54 In the Indian fantasy film, *Raja Harishchandra*, the king explains to his queen that he has given his kingdom to an old sage whom he had offended. The shot uses a moderately close framing typical of Western filmmaking.

Raja Harishchandra

2.55, 2.56 In *Raja Harishchandra*, Phalke uses consistent screen direction as the king walks rightward through the forest and, in a cut to a contiguous space, arrives at the hut of the villainous sage.

REFERENCES

1. Inscription on a photograph reproduced in Charles Ford, *Max Linder* (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1966), opposite p. 65.
2. Quoted in Tom Gunning, *D. W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film: The Early Years at Biograph* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp. 219–20.
3. Quoted in Yuri Tsivian et al., *Silent Witnesses: Russian Films 1908–1919* (London: British Film Institute, 1989), p. 586.
4. Quoted in Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema, 1907–1915* (New York: Scribners, 1990), p. 57. The original word used by Capus was *scene*, which was the term used during the period to mean *shot.*
5. "Spectator" [Frank Woods], "Spectator's Comments," *New York Dramatic Mirror* 65, no. 1681 (8 March 1911): 29.
6. Quoted in Gunning, *D. W. Griffith*, p. 204. The word *bloodless* refers to the fact that no actual violence is committed in the film.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art:*
On Albert Capellani: "Capellani ritrovato" and "Capellani trionfante" (both in English)
On a Griffith Biograph film: "A variation on a sunbeam: Exploring a Griffith Biograph film"
On color in early films: "Historical film colors: A guest entry from Barbara Flueckiger"

CHAPTER 3

Manhattan Madness

NATIONAL CINEMAS, HOLLYWOOD CLASSICISM, AND WORLD WAR I, 1913–1919

The City Slicker

The year just before World War I marked a turning point in the history of the cinema. In 1913, an extraordinary array of important feature films were made in Europe: in France, Léonce Perret's *L'Enfant de Paris* and Albert Capellani's *Germinal*; in Germany, Paul von Woringen's *Die Landstrasse* and Stellan Rye's *The Student of Prague*; in Denmark, August Blom's *Atlantis* and Benjamin Christensen's *The Mysterious X*; in Sweden, Victor Sjöström's *Ingeborg Holm*; and in Italy, Giovanni Pastrone's *Cabiria* (released in early 1914). Also in 1913, the serial emerged as a major film form, and labor-saving techniques were introduced into animation. During the mid-teens, the feature film was becoming standardized internationally. A few directors brought Swedish cinema into a "golden age" that would last into the 1920s.

Around the world, filmmakers were exploring the expressive possibilities of film style. In its first decade or so, cinema relied on the display of action for its novelty value. Then, during the nickelodeon era, filmmakers tested ways of telling stories clearly. From about 1912 on, directors increasingly realized that distinctive lighting, editing, acting, staging, set design, and other film techniques could not only clarify the unfolding of the action but also heighten the film's impact. Time and again in this chapter, we will see filmmakers creating striking compositions by backlighting subjects, using lengthy takes to create a realistic sense of ordinary time passing, or cutting among widely disparate elements to make a conceptual point. Such techniques could enhance the narrative by lending atmosphere, meaning, and suspense.

Some countries saw the creation and consolidation of major firms and studios that would dominate film history for decades; most crucially, the Hollywood industry was taking shape. In August 1914, during these important changes, World War I began. The war had profound effects on the international cinema, some of which are still felt today. The war effort severely

curtailed filmmaking in the two leading producing countries: France and Italy. American companies stepped in to fill the vacuum.

As of 1916, the United States became the major supplier of films to the world market, and it has held that position ever since. Much of the history of world cinema has been bound up with the struggles of various national industries to compete with Hollywood's domination. The war also limited the free flow of films and influences across borders. The result was the isolation of several film-producing countries, where, for the first time, distinctive national cinemas evolved.

THE AMERICAN TAKEOVER OF WORLD MARKETS

Until 1912, American film companies focused on competing for the domestic market. They were hard put to satisfy the huge demand for films created by the nickelodeon boom. Edison, American Biograph, and other Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC) members also sought to limit competition from French, Italian, and other imported films.

Still, it was obvious that a great deal of money was to be made in exporting films. The first American company to open its own distribution offices in Europe was Vitagraph, which had a branch in London in 1906 and soon a second in Paris. By 1909, other American firms were moving into foreign markets as well. This expansion of American distribution abroad continued until the mid-1920s.

Initially, most companies sold their films indirectly through export agents or foreign distribution firms. London became a center for the international circulation of US films. Many British firms profited by acting as the agents for this business, though in doing so they weakened British production by turning over a large share of the UK market to American films.

France, Italy, and other producing countries still provided stiff competition around the world. Nonetheless, even before the war began, US films were becoming very popular in Great Britain, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand. In most other markets, however, the American share was much smaller. Without the war, Hollywood might not have gained a preeminent global position.

The beginning of the war nearly wiped out French filmmaking. Many industry personnel were immediately sent to the front. Pathé's raw-stock factory switched to manufacturing munitions, and studios were converted into barracks. As it became apparent that the fighting would drag on for years, the French industry gradually resumed production, but never on the scale of the prewar era. A less extreme drop in production affected Italy once it entered the war in 1915.

Cut off from European films, many countries found a new source in the United States. By 1916, American exports had risen dramatically. Over the next few years, American firms sold fewer films through London agents. They began to market their own products directly, opening distribution branches in South America, Australia, the Far East, and European countries not isolated by the hostilities. In this way, American companies collected all the profits themselves and were soon in a strong position in many countries. South America became a major market for US exports, and in Australia and New Zealand, American films comprised 95 percent of all screenings. The US shares of even the French and Italian markets were rising.

After the war, the US industry maintained its lead abroad partly because of other economic factors. A film's production budget was based on how much it could be expected to earn. Up to the mid-1910s, when most of an American film's income came from the domestic market, budgets were modest. Once a film could predictably earn more money abroad, its budget could be higher. It could then recover its costs in the United States and be sold cheaply abroad, undercutting local production. By 1917, Hollywood firms were estimating costs based on both domestic and foreign sales. Accordingly, producers invested in big sets, lavish costumes, and more lighting equipment. Highly paid stars such as Mary Pickford and William S. Hart were soon idolized around the world (**3.1**). By late 1918, Hollywood also had a backlog of films to flood the markets of countries formerly cut off by the war.

Other countries found it hard to compete against Hollywood production values. Low budgets led to low sales, which in turn perpetuated the low budgets. Moreover, it was usually cheaper to buy an American film than to finance a local production. Over time, some countries managed to counter these disadvantages, at least temporarily. Throughout this book, we shall see how alternatives to Hollywood cinema have arisen. Basically, however, Hollywood has had two advantages since the mid-1910s: the average production budget has remained higher in Hollywood than anywhere else in the world, and importing an American film is still often cheaper than producing one locally.

Bettmann/Getty Images

3.1 In the early 1920s, in Mumbai, India a large poster mounted on a cart advertises Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921) to a group of street laborers and hotel staff.

THE RISE OF NATIONAL CINEMAS

Before World War I, the cinema was largely an international affair. Technical and artistic discoveries made in one country were quickly seen and assimilated elsewhere. The war, however, disrupted the flow of films across borders. Some national industries benefited from this disruption. A few countries were partially or wholly cut off from imports, yet the demand for films remained. Hence domestic production rose in such countries, especially Sweden, Russia, and Germany. Other countries, such as France, Denmark, and Italy, suffered a decline from prewar levels but managed to continue and improve on prewar traditions. In many cases, stylistic influences could not circulate so freely across borders. For example, the singular filmmaking practice that developed in Russia during the war had virtually no impact abroad and remained almost entirely unknown elsewhere for more than seventy years. (See "Notes and Queries" online.)

Germany

Before 1912, the German film industry was relatively insignificant. Its films were not widely exported, and imports dominated its domestic market. The cinema also had a low reputation in Germany. During the early 1910s, reformers and censors attacked film as immoral.

Competition from films had caused theater attendance to decline. In May 1912, organizations of playwrights, directors, and actors went so far as to boycott this low form of entertainment. By late 1912, however, the boycott was broken, as film producers competed to sign those same playwrights, directors, and actors to exclusive contracts. Similarly, film firms sought to adapt prestigious literary works and to have established authors write original screenplays.

During 1913, there arose the *Autorenfilm*, or "authors' film." The term *author* did not mean then what *auteur* means today—the director of the film. Rather, the Autorenfilm was publicized largely on the basis of a famous

writer responsible for the script or the original literary work from which the film was adapted. The director of the film was seldom mentioned. The Autorenfilm was, in effect, Germany's equivalent of the Film d'Art in France (See France: Pathé versus Gaumont) and other attempts at creating an artistic cinema. Similarly, stage stars were hired and featured prominently in the publicity for such films. A few leading theatrical directors, most notably Max Reinhardt, worked briefly in the cinema.

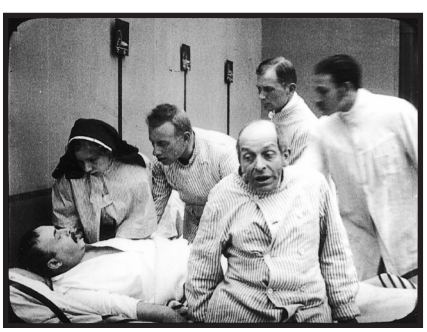
The Autorenfilm was established with *Der Andere* ("The Other," 1913, Max Mack), adapted from a drama by playwright Paul Lindau and starring a major theatrical performer, Albert Bassermann. Another important Autorenfilm was *Die Landstrasse* ("The Country Road," 1913, Paul von Woringen). This time Lindau wrote an original script, dealing with an escaped convict who commits a murder in a small village. The murder is blamed on a passing beggar, who is finally cleared by the convict's deathbed confession.

From a modern perspective, *Die Landstrasse* seems an unusually sophisticated film. It proceeds at a slow pace, carefully setting up parallels between the convict and the beggar. There are a number of very long takes that deemphasize action in favor of concentration on minute details—an early exploration of expressive cinematic techniques. One framing simply shows a forest setting, with the beggar wandering in from the background and sitting by a bush in the foreground to eat scraps of food he has obtained in the village. More dramatically, the revelation of the dying convict's guilt comes in a minutes-long shot that encompasses the beggar's anguished reaction and the reactions of the onlookers (**3.2**).

The most successful and famous Autorenfilm was *The Student of Prague* (1913, Stellan Rye). It was based on an original screenplay by the popular writer Hanns Heinz Ewers and marked the entry of theater star Paul Wegener into the cinema. For decades, Wegener was to remain a major force in German filmmaking. *The Student of Prague* is a Faust-like story of a student who gives his mirror image to a demonic character in exchange for wealth. The image dogs the hero and finally provokes a fatal duel. Aided by the great cameraman Guido Seeber, Rye and Wegener used special effects to create scenes of the student and his double confronting each other (**3.3**). The fantasy elements of this film would become a prominent trait of German cinema, culminating in the German Expressionist movement of the 1920s (see Chapter 5).

The Autorenfilm lent respectability to the cinema, but most of the films were not successful with the public, and the notion of basing films on works by famous authors declined during 1914. During the same period, however, the German industry was expanding. Domestic films were gaining popular success, largely due to the rise of the star system. Two very different female stars became widely known. The blonde Henny Porten was the ideal of German womanhood. Her films were soon export successes, and she was on the verge of becoming internationally famous as the war began. In Germany, she was hugely popular during the 1920s. The Danish actress Asta Nielsen (see 2.19–2.21) had quickly caught on in Germany after moving there in 1911. Nielsen's films were notable for her varied portrayals, ranging from comic adolescents to betrayed lovers (**3.4**), and she had a great influence on acting styles in other countries.

During the early years of the war, Germany continued to import films, especially from Denmark. Officials soon concluded, however, that the anti-German content of some of these films was hurting the war effort. In 1916, Germany banned film imports. This ban stimulated the domestic film industry, helping it to become powerful internationally after the war.


Die Landstrasse

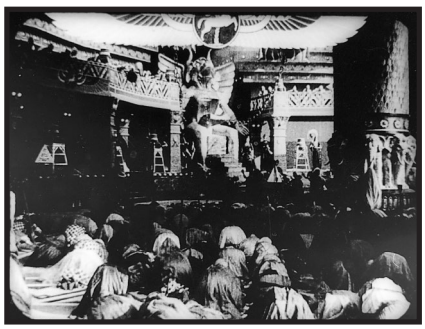
3.2 The climactic scene of *Die Landstrasse* consists primarily of a lengthy take concentrating on gradual changes in the characters' expressions.

The Student of Prague

3.3 In *The Student of Prague,* exposure of separate portions of the same shot during filming allowed two characters, both played by Paul Wegener, to confront each other.

Weisse Rosen

3.4 This scene of Asta Nielsen, in *Weisse Rosen* ("White Roses," 1916), is filmed into a mirror. Characters enter and exit as reflections, as the plot develops.


Cabiria

3.5 The large interior of the temple in *Cabiria.*

Ma l'amor mio non muore

3.6 Lyda Borelli, as an actress alone in her dressing room, strikes a dramatic pose reflected by her mirror in *Ma l'amor mio non muore!*

Cabiria

3.7 The faithful Maciste, seen here in a shot from *Cabiria*, inspired the strongman genre in Italian cinema.

Italy

Italian cinema flourished in the first half of the 1910s. The success of exported films and the establishment of the feature film attracted talented people to the industry and led producing companies to compete energetically.

Historical epics continued to have the most significant triumphs abroad. In 1913, Enrico Guazzoni's *Quo Vadis?* was an enormous hit and confirmed the epic as Italy's most prestigious genre. *Quo Vadis?* was followed in 1914 by one of the most internationally popular films of the era, Giovanni Pastrone's *Cabiria.*

Set in the Roman Empire of the third century B.C., *Cabiria* involved kidnapping and human sacrifice, as the hero Fulvio and his strongman slave Maciste try to rescue the heroine. Mammoth scenes showed a palace destroyed by an erupting volcano and a huge temple within which children are thrown into a fiery figure of the pagan god Moloch (**3.5**; **Video 3.1**). *Cabiria* also used innovative slow tracking shots toward or away from static action. Camera movement had appeared in the early years of the cinema, particularly in scenics (see Scenics, Topicals, and Fiction Films). Filmmakers had also occasionally used mobile framing for expressive purposes in narrative films, as when D. W. Griffith began and ended *The Country Doctor* (1909) with pans across a rural landscape. *Cabiria*'s tracking shots were more influential, however, and the "Cabiria movement" became a common technique in films of the mid-1910s.

A second distinctively Italian genre resulted from the rise of the star system. Several beautiful female stars became wildly popular. These were the *divas* ("goddesses"). They typically starred in what are sometimes known as *frock-coat films*—stories of passion and intrigue in upper-middle-class and aristocratic settings. The situations were unrealistic and often tragic, usually featuring eroticism and death, and were initially influenced by the importation of Asta Nielsen's German films.

The diva films played up luxurious settings, fashionable costumes, and the heightened acting of the performers. *Ma l'amor mio non muore!* ("But My Love Does Not Die!" 1913, Mario Caserini) established the genre (**3.6**). It made Lyda Borelli an instant star, and she remained one of the most celebrated divas. Borelli's main rival was Francesca Bertini, whose 1915 *Assunta Spina* (Gustavo Serena) was a rare diva film set in a working-class milieu. Bertini went on to make a series of more luxurious films based on her star persona. These included a spy melodrama, *Diana l'affascinatrice* ("Diana the Seductress," 1915, Gustavo Serena), that displayed Bertini's histrionic talents and elegant costumes. Diva films remained popular during the second half of the 1910s and then quickly declined in the 1920s.

The male equivalent of the diva was the strongman. The characters of Ursus in *Quo Vadis?* and Maciste in *Cabiria* started this trend. A muscular dockworker, Bartolomeo Pagano (**3.7**), played Maciste, who so fascinated audiences that Pagano went on to star in a series of Maciste films lasting into the 1920s. Unlike *Cabiria*, these and other strongman films were set in the present. This genre declined temporarily after 1923, as Italian filmmaking sank into crisis. The *peplum film*, or the heroic historical epic, often involving brawny heroes, resurfaced decades later with such films as *Hercules* (1957).

After the war, Italy tried to regain its place on world markets but could not make inroads against American films. In 1919, a large new firm called the Unione Cinematografica Italiana (UCI) attempted to revive Italian production. Its dependence on formulaic filmmaking, however, exacerbated the industry's decline during the 1920s.

Russia

Like Germany, Russia developed a distinctive national cinema in near isolation as a result of World War I. Before

the war, Russian production had been largely dominated by Pathé, which opened a studio in Russia in 1908, and Gaumont, which followed suit in 1909. The first Russian-owned filmmaking company, started in 1907 by photographer A. O. Drankov, was able to compete reasonably well. A second Russian firm, Khanzhonkov, appeared in 1908. During the early 1910s, exhibition expanded, and other, smaller Russian producers opened companies.

As in other European countries, between 1912 and 1913 the cinema was gaining respectability, with famous authors writing scenarios. Because Tsar Nikolai II and his family were ardent film fans, fashionable audiences as well as the masses went to the cinema. Although most audiences favored imported films, by 1914 Russia had a small but healthy film industry.

When Russia prepared for World War I in late July 1914, the borders were closed, and many foreign distribution firms—primarily the German ones—closed their Moscow offices. In 1915, when Italy entered the war, its films also dwindled in the Russian market, and the domestic industry continued to grow. With competition reduced, new Russian companies were formed, most significantly the Yermoliev firm.

During this era, Russian filmmakers introduced a distinctive approach to the new art. First, they explored subject matter with a melancholy tone. Even before the war, Russian audiences favored tragic endings. As one film trade journal put it, " 'All's well that ends well!' This is the guiding principle of foreign cinema. But Russian cinema stubbornly refuses to accept this and goes its own way. Here it's 'All's well that ends badly'—we need tragic endings."[1] The pace of many Russian films was slow, with frequent pauses and deliberate gestures enabling the players to linger over each action.

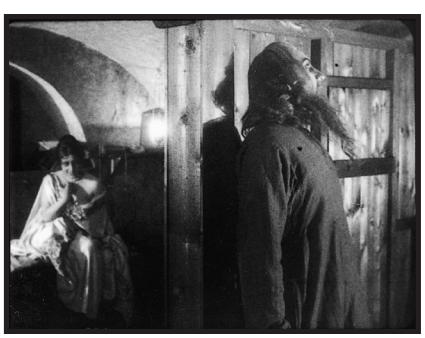
This slow pace derived from a fascination with psychology. One appeal of these films was the display of intense, virtuoso acting. In this, Russian filmmaking was heavily influenced by Italian, German, and Danish films. Russian producers consciously sought actors and actresses who could duplicate Asta Nielsen's popularity. Many Russian films of this period were also somewhat comparable to the Italian diva films, which made intensity of acting the main appeal. Russian acting, however, was less flamboyant and more internalized.

The two most important Russian directors of the war period, Evgenii Bauer and Yakov Protazanov, were masters of the brooding melodrama. From a training in art, Bauer entered the cinema in 1912 as a set designer and soon became a director. His mise-en-scène was characterized by deep, detailed sets and an unusually strong sidelighting; he also occasionally used complex tracking shots. Several of Bauer's films carried the Russian love for melancholy to extremes, centering on morbid subject matter. In *The Dying Swan* (1917), an obsessed artist tries to capture death in his painting of a melancholy ballerina; when she is suddenly transformed by love, he strangles her in order to finish his masterpiece (**3.8**). Bauer was the main director at the Khanzhonkov company, where he was given free artistic rein.

Protazanov began directing in 1912, and he worked mostly for Yermoliev. Several of his main films of this period were prestigious adaptations from Pushkin and Tolstoy. They starred Ivan Mozhukhin, a stage actor who had become immensely popular in films. Mozhukhin was the epitome of the Russian ideal in acting; tall and handsome, with hypnotic eyes, he cultivated a slow, fervent style. He starred in the title role of Protazanov's adaptation of Tolstoy's novel *Father Sergius*, made in 1917 between the February and October Revolutions and released in early 1918 (**3.9**). After a brief self-exile in Paris, Protazanov returned to become one of the most successful directors in the USSR when filmmaking revived there during the 1920s.

By 1916, the Russian film industry had grown to thirty production firms. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution brought filmmaking to a near standstill, however, and the slow, intense style that had developed in Russia during the war soon looked old-fashioned. Chapter 6 looks more closely at the changes in the cinema made by the Soviet government.

The Dying Swan



Father Sergius

3.8, *left* The final scene of *The Dying Swan* with the heroine's corpse serving as the artist's model.

3.9, *right* In *Father Sergius*, Protazanov uses sidelighting and staging in depth to enhance the tragic atmosphere as the protagonist resists seduction by a jaded society woman.

THE BRIEF HEYDAY OF THE SERIAL

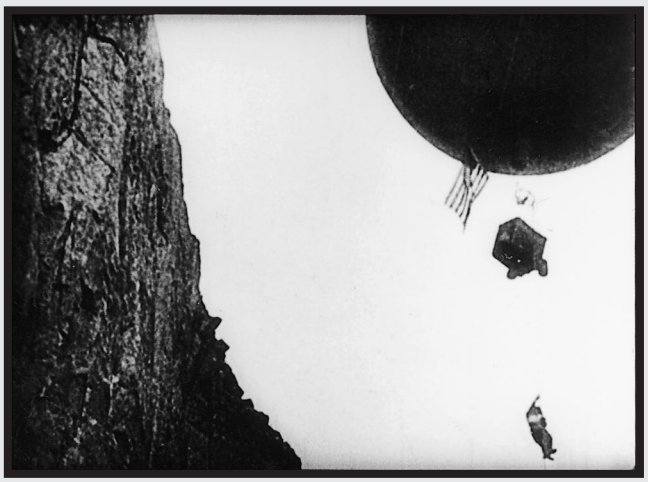
Today the serial is usually remembered as a trivial form of cinema, consisting largely of low-budget thrillers aimed at youthful matinee audiences from the 1930s to the 1950s. Yet the serial served as the main attraction in many theaters during the 1910s. Serial episodes can be seen as a kind of transitional form between the one-reel film and the feature. Though some early serial episodes were quite short, others lasted forty-five minutes or more. They were shown with other short films—newsreels, cartoons, comic or dramatic narratives—but they formed the core of the program. Serials were usually action oriented, offering thrilling elements such as master criminals, lost treasures, exotic locales, and daring rescues.

The true serial carried a story line over all its episodes. Typically, each episode ended at a high point, with the main characters in danger. These *cliffhangers* (so called because characters often ended up suspended from cliffs or buildings) lured the spectator back for the next installment.

Serials originated at almost the same time in the United States and France. The earliest American serial was *The Adventures of Kathlyn* (1914), made by the Selig company and starring Kathlyn Williams. Its episodes, set in India, were self-contained, but there was also an overall plotline. The same was true of *The Perils of Pauline*, made by Pathé in 1914. This hugely successful serial made a star of Pearl White and inspired other firms to make similar films. Williams and White established the figure of the *serial queen*, a heroine (often described as plucky) who survives numerous outlandish plots against her life (**3.10**). By late 1915, American serials were highly profitable and were technically on a par with feature films of the era.

The greatest filmmaker associated with this form was Louis Feuillade. This prolific Gaumont director made around eighty short films a year between 1907 and 1913, working in various genres. A turning point in his career, however, was the "Fantômas" crime serial, beginning in 1913 with *Fantômas* and continuing through 1914 with four additional feature-length episodes. (Even then, however, he continued to direct comedies as well.) The "Fantômas" serial adapted the popular writings of Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain, whose books have become classics.

Fantômas was the ultimate criminal, master of many disguises, who constantly eluded his determined rival, the detective Juve (**3.11**; **Video 3.2**). Feuillade filmed this crime story in the streets of Paris and in conventional studio sets, creating a bizarre juxtaposition of an everyday milieu and fantastic, nightmarish events. His subsequent thriller serials *Les Vampires* (1915), *Judex* (1916), and *Tih Minh* (1918) continued this style. Feuillade was extremely popular with the general public, but he was also embraced by the Surrealists for the (perhaps unconscious) poetic quality of his work. Feuillade's casual, even comic, treatment of outrageous plot twists makes his films seem highly modern today.



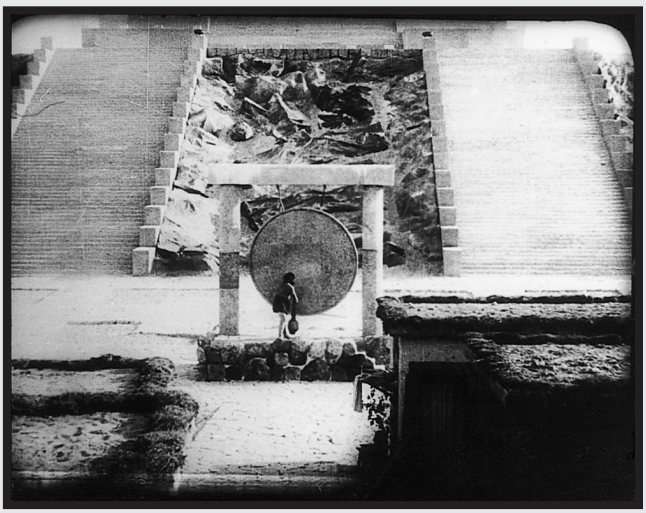
The Perils of Pauline

3.10 Near the end of the first episode of *The Perils of Pauline*, the heroine shinnies down a rope from a balloon that has been set adrift by the villain.

Fantômas

3.11 The first episode of *Fantômas* ends as Juve sees a vision of the escaped Fantômas, in his famous evening clothes and mask, tauntingly holding out his hands to be handcuffed.

Serials also became significant in Germany during the 1910s. *Homunculus* (1916, Otto Rippert) told the story of a laboratory-created humanoid who manipulated stock markets and ultimately tried to control the world. After the war, producer-director Joe May specialized in epic serials starring his



The Mistress of the World

3.12 One of the many large, exotic sets constructed for *The Mistress of the World.*

wife, Mia May, Germany's serial queen. His eight-part epic, *The Mistress of the World* (1919–1920), was perhaps the most expensive German project in the immediate postwar years. During seven episodes, the heroine undergoes ordeals in Chinese, Mayan, and African locales (**3.12**). In the seventh installment, she is rescued; the eighth wittily depicts the making of a sensationalistic film about her adventures.

Serial production continued to be important in France and some other countries into the 1920s, but in the United States it became a way of creating inexpensive programs in smaller theaters and of attracting children. During the sound era, the action serial played the same roles.

Serial films had a great influence on twentieth-century narrative form in general. Serials, especially soap operas, were a staple of radio for decades. Television picked up soap operas, and the continuing story with cliffhangers made its way into prime-time dramas in the 1980s. Modern films have also been influenced. Steven Spielberg based the episodic story of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) on adventure serials. The *Star Wars*, *Matrix*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, and Marvel and DC films all revived the serial format.

France

During the early 1910s, the French film industry was still thriving. Many new theaters were being built, and demand was high. Although imported American films were beginning to encroach on the market, French production remained robust.

In 1913, however, the largest company, Pathé Frères, took steps that ultimately would harm the French industry. It cut back on the increasingly costly production side of the business to concentrate on the profitable areas of distribution and exhibition. In the United States, French films were being squeezed out by the growth of independent firms. Pathé left the MPPC, forming an independent distribution firm in 1913. This firm released several successful serials during the 1910s, including *The Perils of Pauline* (see The Brief Heyday of the Serial). By 1919, however, Pathé's concentration on serials and shorts put it on the margins of the American industry, which was dominated by big firms making features.

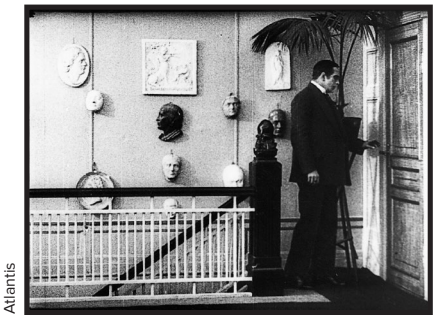
Unlike Pathé, Gaumont expanded its production in the years just before the war. Two important Gaumont directors, Léonce Perret and Louis Feuillade, did some of their best work during this period. Perret had come to fame in 1909 as a comic actor, directing his own series of "Léonce" films. During the mid-1910s, he also made some major features. *L'Enfant de Paris* ("Child of Paris," 1913) and *Le Roman d'un mousse* ("Tale of a Cabin Boy," 1914) were powerfully melodramatic narratives of abducted children. They were notable for their beautiful cinematography, including skillful location filming and an unusual use of backlighting (**3.13**). Perret also varied his camera angles considerably and broke scenes down into more shots than was then typical. He thus helped expand the cinema's expressive possibilities. Perret worked in Hollywood in the second half of the decade and returned to France to make historical epics in the 1920s.

Feuillade continued to work in a variety of genres, including comedies and a naturalistic series, "La vie telle qu'elle est" ("Life as It Is"). His main achievements, however, were in the new serial format (see The Brief Heyday of the Serial).

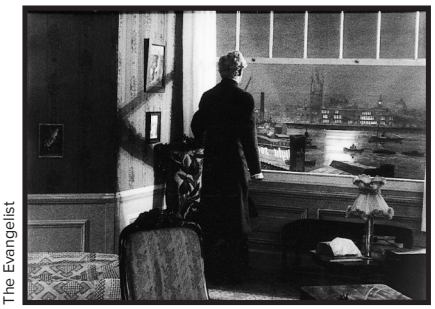
Despite Pathé's and Gaumont's dominance in French production, they made no attempt to monopolize the industry, and smaller companies coexisted peacefully with them, staying in business by specializing in certain types of films. All this activity came to an abrupt halt when

L'Enfant de Paris

3.13 Filming inside a real building without using artificial light, Perret created dramatic silhouette effects in *L'Enfant de Paris.*


Atlantis

3.14 A set depicting a hallway in a sculptor's house attracts the eye in August Blom's *Atlantis.*


The Evangelist

3.15 An elaborate, realistic model of a cityscape, combined with strong backlighting, makes this scene in *Life of an Evangelist* unusual for its period.

World War I began. By the end of 1914, it had become apparent that the fighting would continue for quite a while, and some theaters reopened. In early 1915, production resumed on a limited basis. Newsreels became more important, and all the firms made patriotic fiction films, such as *Mères françaises* ("French Mothers," 1917, René Hervil and Louis Mercanton).

Pathé's response to the war was to focus on its American distribution wing, releasing films made by independent producers in the United States. With the huge success of *The Perils of Pauline* and subsequent serials, Pathé remained profitable. It was, however, no longer providing stable leadership for French film production. Through its distribution, it also helped American films gain a greater share of the French market.

French intellectuals and the general public alike adored the new American stars they discovered during the war: Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, William S. Hart, and Lillian Gish. Writer Philippe Soupault suggests how suddenly and intensely American films affected Parisian viewers:

> Then one day we saw hanging on the walls great posters as long as serpents. At every street-corner a man, his face covered with a red handkerchief, leveled a revolver at the peaceful passersby. We imagined that we heard galloping hoofs, the roar of motors, explosions, and cries of death. We rushed into the cinema, and realized immediately that everything had changed. On the screen appeared the smile of Pearl White—that almost ferocious smile which announced the revolution, the beginning of a new world.[2]

Serial queen Pearl White was idolized in France after the release of *Les Mystères de New York*, the French title of her second Pathé serial, *The Exploits of Elaine* (1915). During 1917, American films passed the 50 percent mark in French exhibition.

The real effect of American films in France was not apparent until after the war. From 1918 to 1919, French firms attempting to bring production back up to its old levels found it virtually impossible to reduce the American share of their market. Chapter 4 examines how the French industry reacted, trying to create competitive alternatives to Hollywood cinema.

Denmark

In Denmark, Ole Olsen's Nordisk films continued to dominate production, though a small number of other firms operated during the 1910s. From 1913 to 1914, Nordisk and other companies were moving toward longer films of two, three, even four reels. One historian has summarized the typical style of Nordisk's films: "The lighting effects, the stories, the realism of interior settings, the extraordinary use of natural and urban locations, the intensity of the naturalistic acting style, the emphasis on fate and the passions."[3]

The work of August Blom, Nordisk's top director of the early teens, typifies this style. His most important film was *Atlantis* (1913), at eight reels the longest Danish film to date. The film offered a fairly conventional psychological melodrama, but it dwelt on beautifully designed sets (**3.14**) and spectacular scenes, such as the sinking of an ocean liner (inspired by the *Titanic* disaster of 1912). *Atlantis* was triumphantly successful abroad.

Another Nordisk director, Forest Holger-Madsen, made an outstanding film, *Life of an Evangelist* (1914). The narrative involves a frame story and lengthy flashback, as a preacher tells a young man about his time in prison as a result of being wrongfully convicted of murder. His tale saves the young man from a life of crime. The preacher's dark, grim room, in which he relates his story, exemplifies the use of setting to create mood (**3.15**).

3.16 Shooting into the sun creates a dramatic silhouette of an old mill, whose blades form part of the "X" motif in Christensen's *The Mysterious X.*

3.17, 3.18 A suspenseful tracking shot in *Night of Revenge*, beginning on the frightened heroine as she sees something outside her window and moving back rapidly to reveal an intruder forcing his way in and rushing to her.

One of the most daring and eccentric directors of the silent cinema also began working in the Danish industry. Benjamin Christensen started as an actor at the small Dansk Biografkompagni in 1911 and soon became president of the firm. His impressive debut as a director was *The Mysterious X* (1913), in which he also starred. It was a melodramatic story of spies and treason, shot in a bold visual style. Stark sidelighting and backlighting created silhouette effects (**3.16**); few films of this period contain such striking compositions. Christensen went on to make an equally virtuoso drama, *Night of Revenge* (1916). Here he added tracking shots that intensify the suspense as a convict terrorizes a family (**3.17**, **3.18**).

Christensen did not complete another film until the 1920s, when his *Witchcraft through the Ages* (1922) was financed by Svensk Filmindustri. It was a bizarre, episodic quasi-documentary tracing the history of witchcraft. After encountering censorship difficulties, Christensen moved into more conventional filmmaking, directing dramas and thrillers in Germany and Hollywood during the 1920s.

World War I had a mixed effect on the Danish cinema. Initially Denmark benefited, because, as a neutral northern country, it was in a unique position to furnish films to markets such as Germany and Russia, which were cut off from their normal suppliers. In 1917, the Russian Revolution eliminated that market, and the United States cut back on its imports from Denmark. During the 1910s, many top Danish directors and actors were also lured away, mainly to Germany and Sweden. By the war's end, Denmark was no longer a significant force in international distribution.

Sweden

In 1912, Sweden suddenly began producing a string of innovative films. Most of these were made by only three directors: Georg af Klercker, Mauritz Stiller, and Victor Sjöström. The Swedish cinema initially had little impact abroad, and so its filmmakers were working without the larger budgets made possible by export. Sweden was among the first countries to create a major cinema by drawing deliberately on the particular traits of its national culture. Swedish films were characterized by their dependence on northern landscapes and by their use of local literature, costumes, customs, and the like. After the war's end, their specifically Swedish qualities made these films novel and popular in other countries.

The success of Nordisk in Denmark had been one inspiration for the formation of a small Swedish firm, the Svenska Biografteatern, in 1907. It eventually would form the basis of the leading Swedish film firm, still in existence today. Located in the small provincial city of Kristianstad, Svenska was initially a theater chain. In 1909, Charles Magnusson took over its management and built it into the country's main production company. In 1910, Julius Jaenzon, a cinematographer who had mainly made topicals, joined the firm. He was to photograph most of Stiller's and Sjöström's films of the 1910s. Under Magnusson and Jaenzon's guidance, the firm produced films on a small scale in a tiny studio above its main cinema in Kristianstad. (This building is one of the few early glass-sided studios that can still be visited; it houses a small cinema museum.)

In 1912, Svenska moved to a larger studio near Stockholm. The first director hired was Georg af Klercker, who became head of production. That same year, actors Mauritz Stiller and Victor Sjöström were hired to boost Svenska's production. All three directed, wrote scripts, and acted. They made many short films with modest budgets during the next few years.

After the beginning of the war, Germany blocked film imports to several northern European countries. Because few films got past this blockade, Swedish production was boosted and filmmakers were relatively free of foreign influences for a few years.

Georg af Klercker was a versatile director with a strong sense of pictorial beauty. Af Klercker had begun as an actor, and he also did set designs when he first joined Svenska. He was soon directing but did not get on well with Magnusson and quit in 1913. He then worked at smaller production firms, primarily Hasselbladfilm (founded in 1915). There he was the undisputed leader, directing most of the firm's output.

Af Klercker made comedies, crime thrillers, war films, and melodramas, usually with fairly conventional stories. In all of them, however, he displays a distinctive eye for landscape, light, and a variety of framing within scenes. His films contain some of the most beautiful sets of this period, defined by simple lines but richly furnished with details. Af Klercker skillfully suggests offscreen space: background rooms are often just visible through beaded curtains, and mirrors reveal action occurring outside the frame (**3.19**). He also elicited subtle, restrained performances from his actors. From 1918 to 1919, Hasselblad went through mergers that made it a part of Svenska Bio, which then became Svensk Filmindustri (the name it has kept ever since). At that point, af Klercker gave up filmmaking to go into business.

Af Klercker's more famous colleagues, Stiller and Sjöström, both stayed at Svenska, directing, acting, and writing scripts. They were extremely prolific until both went to Hollywood, Sjöström in 1923 and Stiller in 1925. Unfortunately, however, most of the negatives of the films made by Svenska were destroyed in a fire in 1941. This disaster, one of the most tragic losses among many nitrate fires, means that few of Svenska's early films have survived. Most existing prints of Stiller and Sjöström films have been copied from early release prints.

So many of Mauritz Stiller's early films are lost that it is difficult to judge his career before the mid-1910s. He is mainly remembered for the urbane wit of several films he made between 1916 and 1920, as well as for his adaptations of the works of Nobel prize–winning Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf.

Mysteriet natten till den 25:e

3.19 Offscreen space in *Mysteriet natten till den 25:e* ("Mysterious Night of the 25th," 1917): the robber realizes by glancing into a mirror that the detective has hidden to wait for him.

The wit was well displayed in the comedy *Thomas Graal's Best Film* (1917). In it, an eccentric scriptwriter-actor (played delightfully by Victor Sjöström) glimpses and falls in love with a young woman, Bessie, and refuses to finish his overdue scenario unless she can be found and persuaded to star in it. Meanwhile, the free-spirited Bessie rejects her wealthy parents' choice of a fiancé and decides to accept the movie role (**3.20**). The film alternates between the two main characters, including scenes representing the scenario the hero writes, which fantasizes a love story between him and Bessie. Eventually the two actually meet and become engaged. The result was one of the cleverest films about filmmaking made in the silent era. It was so successful that a sequel was made: *Thomas Graal's Best Child* (1918), in which the pair marry and have a baby.

Stiller's most famous film was the antithesis of these comedies. A tragedy set in Renaissance-period Sweden, *Sir Arne's Treasure* (1919) was adapted from a Lagerlöf story. Three fugitive mercenaries pillage the castle of Sir Arne, trying to escape with his treasure. The town's harbor is icebound, however, trapping them until spring. The young woman Elsalill, the sole survivor of the massacre, falls in love with Sir Archie, not realizing that he is one of the killers. Despite his love for Elsalill, Sir Archie uses her as a shield in a vain escape attempt. The final scene shows the townspeople bearing her coffin across the ice as spring approaches (**3.21**).

Thomas Graal's Best Film

3.20 The heroine of *Thomas Graal's Best Film* finds out she is to star in a film and practices acting—in a flamboyant style that parodies Italian diva films.

Sir Arne's Treasure

3.21 At the end of *Sir Arne's Treasure*, the heroine's body is borne past the icebound ship on which the mercenaries had hoped to escape.

Stiller continued making both comedies and dramas. In 1920, he directed *Erotikon*, often credited as the first sophisticated sex comedy. It treated romantic relations casually, as a neglected young wife starts an affair with a handsome suitor while her middle-aged husband, an absentminded professor, pairs off with his pretty niece. *Erotikon* may well have influenced German director Ernst Lubitsch, who later became famous for clever sexual innuendo in his films in Hollywood in the 1920s. Stiller also adapted another Lagerlöf novel in his two-part epic, *The Story of Gösta Berling* (1924). This story of a defrocked minister torn between a dissolute life and the love of an unhappily married countess contains several remarkable scenes and performances; among these is the first major role of the young Greta Garbo, as the countess. She was discovered by Stiller, and they both soon went to Hollywood, where her career was more successful than his.

Victor Sjöström was one of the most important directors of the entire silent era. His style was austere and naturalistic. He used restrained acting and staged scenes in considerable depth, both in location shots and in sets. His narratives frequently traced in great detail the grim consequences of a single action.

Sjöström's early masterpiece, *Ingeborg Holm* (1913), begins with a happy middle-class family; the father falls ill and dies and the wife descends into poverty and madness as she struggles vainly to keep her children. The film consists primarily of lengthy shots that hold on a series of actions that unfold within deep spaces (**3.22–3.26**). The slow, steady pace conveys a remarkable impression of the heroine's decades of misfortune, despite the fact that *Ingeborg Holm* lasts only about seventy minutes.

Terje Vigen (1916) demonstrates Sjöström's mastery of landscape as an expressive element in the action. During wartime, Terje Vigen, a sailor, attempts to fetch food in his rowboat but is captured by the enemy. During his lengthy imprisonment, his wife and child die of starvation. Years later, the embittered protagonist gains power over the family of the man who captured him and must decide whether to wreak his revenge on them. Again the narrative traces out the long-term results of an event, suggesting an implacable fate guiding the characters. Sjöström

Ingeborg Holm

3.22

3.23

3.24

3.25

3.26

3.22–3.26 In *Ingeborg Holm*, a long-shot framing shows the heroine parting from her son. Reluctant to leave her, he returns to hug her again as the gatekeeper opens the gate (**3.22**). As the boy moves away again with his foster mother, Ingeborg quickly ducks into the doorway (**3.23**). The boy turns back once more (**3.24**) and, not seeing his mother, sadly follows his foster mother (**3.25**). Once the pair has gone, the gatekeeper locks the gate and returns just in time to catch Ingeborg as she emerges again and begins to faint (**3.26**). The staging with the heroine's back to the camera displays Sjöström's refusal to overemphasize emotions.

Terje Vigen

The Outlaw and His Wife

3.27, *left* Years after the deaths of his family, the vengeful protagonist rages against the tempestuous sea in *Terje Vigen.*

3.28, *right* The fugitive hero (played by Sjöström) wanders in the vast countryside in *The Outlaw and His Wife.*

heightens the effect of his narrative by using the sea as a prominent backdrop for much of the action, seeming to reflect the hero's anger (**3.27**).

Landscapes were also prominent in *The Outlaw and His Wife* (1917). Again a single desperate action, the hero's theft of a sheep to feed his family, affects his entire life. Fleeing arrest (**3.28**), Berg-Ejvind finds temporary safety working on the farm of a rich widow, Halla. They fall in love, but he is again pursued by the authorities. Abandoning her estate, Halla follows Berg-Ejvind into the mountains, where they live together for many years before dying in each other's arms in a blizzard. Sjöström daringly undercut the intense romanticism of this story by making the final scene in a snowbound cabin involve an ugly, petty quarrel between the couple; they reconcile at the end, just before they die.

The war had restricted exports of Swedish films, and *The Outlaw and His Wife* was the first to burst onto the international scene. The French, reeling from the recent flood of American films, reacted with delight. Critic and future filmmaker Louis Delluc praised *The Outlaw and His Wife:*

> And the public is swept away with emotion. For the public is awestruck by the barren landscapes, the mountains, the rustic costumes, both the austere ugliness and the acute lyricism of such closely observed feelings, the truthfulness of the long scenes which focus exclusively on the couple, the violent struggles, the high tragic end of the two aged lovers who escape life through a final embrace in a desertlike snowscape.[4]

In general, the Swedish cinema was recognized as the first major alternative to Hollywood to emerge after the war.

Even more successful was Sjöström's 1920 film *The Phantom Chariot*, again adapted from Lagerlöf. It uses remarkably complex means to tell the story of a drunken lout who nearly dies in a cemetery at midnight on New Year's Eve. He is given a chance to ride a ghostly carriage driven by death and witness how his behavior ruined the lives of two women who love him. The spectral superimpositions (accomplished entirely in the camera during filming) were some of the most elaborate yet attempted. Similarly, *The Phantom Chariot*'s story was told in an intricately interwoven set of flashbacks that became highly influential in European cinema of the 1920s (**Video 3.3**).

Ironically, the very success of the Swedish cinema abroad contributed to its decline. After about 1920, Svenska concentrated on expensive prestige pictures designed for export. Only a few of these, like *The Story of Gösta Berling*, were artistic successes. Sjöström's and Stiller's growing reputations led Hollywood firms to lure them away from Svensk Filmindustri. Moreover, other countries were entering the international marketplace, and the small Swedish cinema could not compete. After 1921, film production in Sweden plummeted.

THE CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

The MPPC had dominated the American film industry between 1908 and 1911, but it lost much of its power after a 1912 court decision rendered the Latham loop patent void (see American Developments p. 10). Independent firms soon regrouped and expanded into a studio system that would form the basis for American filmmaking for decades. Certain filmmaking roles—chiefly the role of the producer—became central. In addition, the star system gained full strength, as celebrities came to command enormous salaries and even began producing in their own right.

The Major Studios Begin to Form

The process of building the Hollywood studio system often involved the combination of two or more small production or distribution firms. In 1912, independent producer Carl Laemmle, who had doggedly fought the MPPC, was pivotal in forming the Universal Film Manufacturing Company, a distribution firm to release the output of his own Independent Motion Picture Company and several other independent and foreign firms. By 1913,

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

3.29 A row of open-air filmmaking stages at Universal City, c. 1915. A series of films could be made simultaneously on sets built side by side. The overhead framework held sheets of translucent material to diffuse the strong California sunlight.

Laemmle had gained control of the new company, and in 1915 he opened Universal City, a studio north of Hollywood (**3.29**), forming the basis of a complex that still exists. By that point, Universal was moving toward vertical integration, combining production and distribution in the same firm.

Also in 1912, Adolph Zukor scored a tremendous success by importing and distributing *Queen Elizabeth*, a French feature starring Sarah Bernhardt. Zukor then formed Famous Players in Famous Plays to exploit the star system and prestigious literary adaptations. Famous Players would soon become part of the most powerful studio in Hollywood. Another step toward the studio system came in 1914, when W. W. Hodkinson banded eleven local distributors together into Paramount, the first national distributor devoted solely to features. Zukor was soon distributing his Famous Players films through Paramount.

Another feature-film company originated in 1914. The Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company was centered primarily around the films of former playwright Cecil B. De Mille. Lasky also distributed through Paramount. In 1916, Zukor took over Paramount, merged Famous Players in Famous Plays and the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company into Famous Players–Lasky and made Paramount this new firm's distribution subsidiary. This was another key move in fusing smaller American producers and distributors into larger, vertically integrated firms. Paramount soon controlled many of the most popular silent stars, including Gloria Swanson, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks, as well as top directors such as D. W. Griffith, Mack Sennett, and De Mille.

Other firms formed during the 1910s would be crucial in the industry. Sam, Jack, and Harry Warner moved from exhibiting to distributing, founding Warner Bros. in 1913. By 1918, they began producing but remained a relatively small firm until the 1920s. William Fox, who had small exhibition, distribution, and production operations, merged all three in 1914 to form the Fox Film Corporation. The new firm would be a major player in 1920s Hollywood (eventually being renamed 20th Century-Fox in 1935). Three smaller firms that would merge into MGM in 1924 all began during this era: Metro in 1914 and Goldwyn and Mayer in 1917.

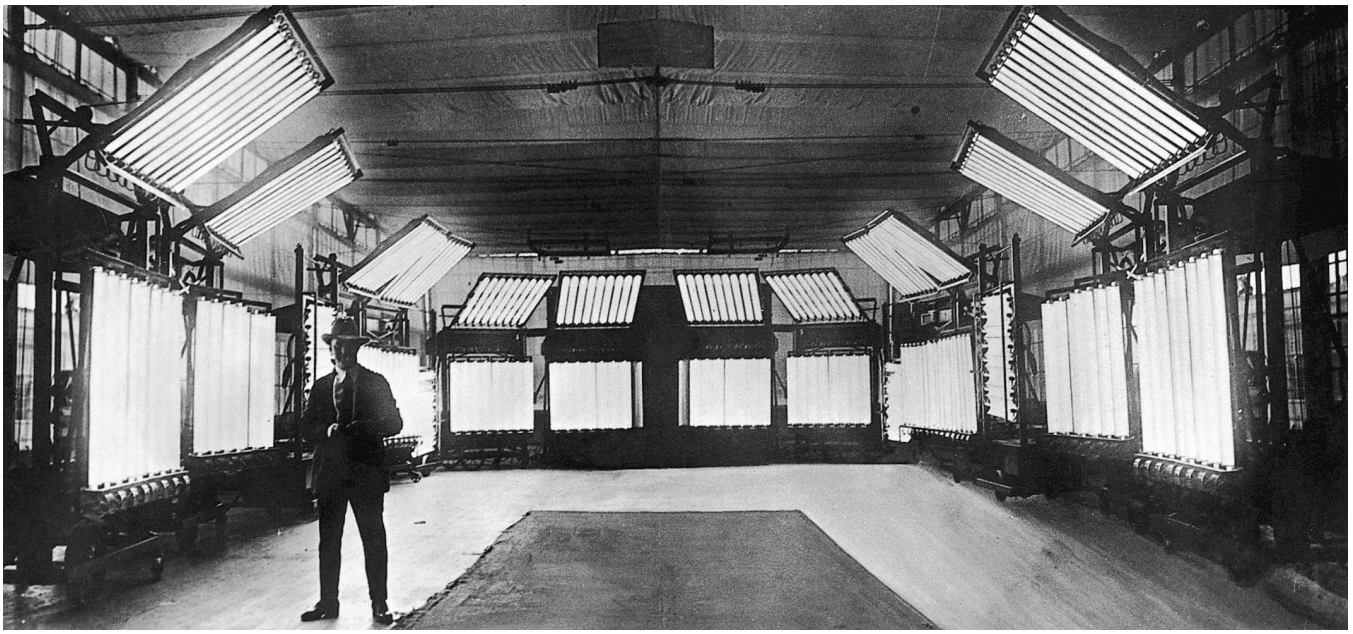
A major challenge to Paramount's growing power soon arose. Paramount was releasing about one hundred features a year and requiring theaters to show all of them (with two programs per week) in order to get any. This was an early instance of *block booking*, a practice that was later repeatedly challenged as monopolistic. In 1917, a group of exhibitors resisted this tactic by banding together to finance and distribute independent features. They formed the First National Exhibitors Circuit, which soon was supplying films to hundreds of theaters nationwide.

Zukor responded in 1919 by persuading Wall Street investors to fund the purchase of theater chains for his own company. This set the stage for greater involvement of New York banks in the emerging film industry. The Paramount strategy, giving one company control of production, distribution, and exhibition, became a model for the vertical integration of Hollywood studios.

During this period, Germany was just beginning to develop a vertically integrated industry (see Chapter 5). France's leading firm, Pathé, was backing away from vertical integration by moving out of production. Vertical integration helped Hollywood become the strongest studio system in the world.

Controlling Filmmaking

The Hollywood studios have often been referred to as factories, turning out strings of similar films as if on assembly lines. This characterization is only partly true. Each



Bison 101 Archive

3.30 Producer Thomas H. Ince stands in his studio at Inceville. The glass roof and walls are covered with cloth to permit the use of artificial light. Later studios had no windows.

film was different and so required specific planning and execution. The studios did, however, develop methods of making films as efficiently as possible. By 1914, most big firms had differentiated between the director, who was responsible for shooting the film, and the producer, who oversaw the entire production.

The labor of filmmaking was increasingly divided among expert practitioners. There were separate scenario departments, for example, and a writer might specialize in plotting, dialogue, or intertitles. The version used during filming was the *continuity script*, and it broke the action down into individual, numbered shots.

The script allowed the producer to estimate how much a given film would cost. The continuity script also allowed people working on the film to coordinate their efforts, even though they might never communicate directly with each other. In the planning stage, the set designer would use the script to determine what types of sets were necessary. After the shooting was done, the editor put the film together, guided by the numbers shown on a slate at the beginning of each shot, which corresponded to the numbers in the script. These shots were designed to match at each cut, creating a continuity of narrative action.

The big film companies also built studio facilities during the 1910s, mostly in the Los Angeles area. Initially, these primarily involved outdoor filming on covered stages (see 3.29). By the late 1910s, however, large *dark studios* were also constructed, either by covering the glass walls or by building windowless enclosures (**3.30**). Here filmmakers controlled lighting with electric lamps. These studios also had extensive *backlots*, where large outdoor sets could be constructed; to save money, the production firms often kept some of these standing, using them over and over.

Again, no other country could match Hollywood's approach. Few firms employed so many different film specialists, and only a small number of studios outside the United States could boast of facilities as extensive as those of big companies like Paramount.

Filmmaking in Hollywood during the 1910s

During the late 1910s, foreign audiences, many of whom had been cut off from the Hollywood product during the war, marveled at how American films had changed. Aside from having appealing stars and splendid sets, they were fast-paced and stylistically polished. One reason for this appeal was that American filmmakers had gone on exploring the classical Hollywood style, linking visual technique to clear storytelling (see Early Moves toward Classical Storytelling).

Filmmakers continued to use crosscutting in increasingly complex ways. In addition, by the mid-1910s, individual scenes within a single space were likely to be broken into several shots, beginning with an establishing shot, followed by one or more cut-ins to show portions of the

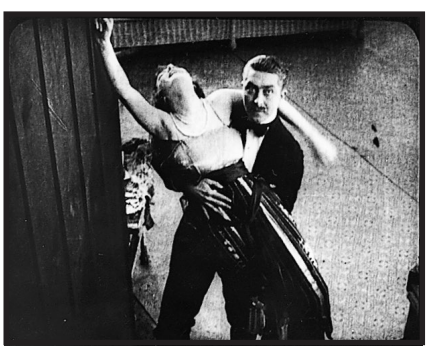
action. Directors and cinematographers were expected to match the positions and movements of actors and objects at each cut so that the shift in framing would be less noticeable. Point-of-view shots were used more commonly and with greater flexibility. The use of shot/reverse-shot editing for conversation situations had been rare in the early 1910s (see The Beginnings of the Continuity System), but by 1917 it occurred at least once in virtually every film (**3.31**, **3.32**). Similarly common were cuts from shots of people looking at something to point-of-view shots revealing what they saw (**3.33**, **3.34**). Indeed, by 1917, the fundamental techniques of continuity editing, including adherence to the 180-degree rule, or axis of action, had been worked out. Filmmakers would typically break even a simple scene into several shots, cutting to closer views and placing the camera at various vantage points within the action itself (**3.35–3.37**). This editing-based manner of constructing a space contrasted considerably with the approach being used in Europe at the same time (see Precision Staging in European Cinema).

The look of individual shots also changed. Most early films were shot using flat, overall light, from either the sun or artificial lights or a combination of both. During the mid-1910s, filmmakers experimented with *effects lighting*, lighting on part of the scene, motivated as coming from a specific source. The most influential film to include this

Manhattan Madness

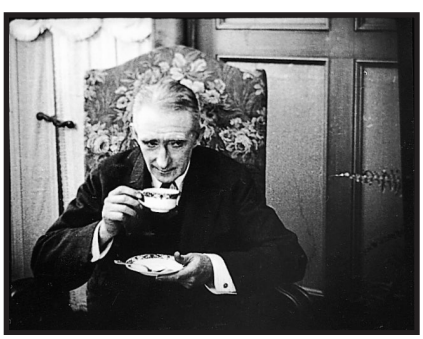
3.31, 3.32 A conversation between the hero, played by Douglas Fairbanks, and the villain of *Manhattan Madness* (1916, Allan Dwan), edited in shot/reverse shot.

The On-the-Square Girl



3.33, 3.34 A cut from a man looking downward to a high angle shows us his point of view on the characters at the bottom of the staircase in *The On-the-Square Girl* (1917, Frederick J. Ireland).

Her Code of Honor



3.35–3.37 A typical continuity editing pattern in *Her Code of Honor* (1919, John Stahl). An establishing shot of a tea party (not shown) leads to a closer view of a young man and woman conversing and then an eyeline match to a medium shot of her stepfather, delighted at their courtship. Finally, a more distant framing reestablishes the space by showing all three characters.

PRECISION STAGING IN EUROPEAN CINEMA

How might you direct the audience's attention in the course of a scene? The Hollywood studios favored cutting together fairly close views of the characters, steering our attention from one to another. By contrast, many 1910s European filmmakers continued to rely on staging within a single shot (see Staging in Depth p. 33–34.). But they refined the approach by creating a complex choreography not seen in earlier years.

In the 1910s, European directors often relied on deep sets. They framed action in windows or other apertures to catch the viewer's eye. They achieved precise, gradually changing compositions by moving the actors to or away from the camera, and by shifting them from side to side to reveal important action in the distance.

Louis Feuillade often used depth staging to convey the quick flow of his busy plots. The lengthy opening shot of *Les Vampires* takes place in a newspaper office as the hero discovers that a dossier on the Vampires gang is missing from his desk (**3.38–3.40**).

By the mid-1910s, directors were employing much deeper interior sets than we saw in *Afgrunden* from 1910 (see 2.19–2.21). In *Assunta Spina* (1915), director Gustavo Serena puts the foreground action somewhat closer to us than Feuillade does, and the background is much farther back. The accused criminal Michele is on trial, and the staging carefully shifts our attention from his plaintive expression in the distance to his distraught mother's reaction in the foreground (**3.41–3.43**).

In one scene of *Nerven* ("Nerves," 1919), a man takes a bottle of poison from a cabinet while his blind sister senses that he is doing something dangerous. In a daring way, director Robert Reinert absorbs American-style close views into European depth staging (**3.44–3.46**). As in all these examples, the directors and actors had to carefully plan how changes of position would open up or close off important action in the background.

During the 1920s, European directors adopted Hollywood's continuity editing system. Precision staging in lengthy takes became rare. It would be revived in the 1930s, when sound filming encouraged it.

Les Vampires

3.38 *Les Vampires*: Philippe had entered through the rear door and now opens a drawer in the foreground desk.

Les Vampires

3.39 As he reacts to the loss of the dossier, one of his colleagues stands up at the rear, looking worried.

Les Vampires

3.40 The colleague tries to leave, but Philippe calls him back. Soon he will confess as the two other reporters watch.

Assunta Spina

3.41 *Assunta Spina*: after the lawyer sits, a woman rushes into the court, and Michele looks up toward the camera.

Assunta Spina

3.42 More women crowd into the foreground, blocking out the other figures in court but leaving Michele's face visible.

Assunta Spina

3.43 Finally, as Michele's mother turns in frame center to reveal her anguish, the other women comfort her, blocking out Michele so that we can concentrate on her reaction.

Nerven

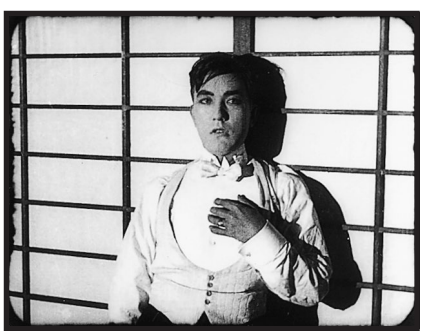
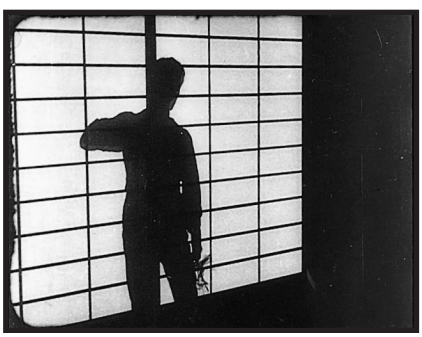
3.44 *Nerven*: Johannes reaches into the cabinet to remove the poison.

Nerven

3.45 He steps forward, examining it.

Nerven

3.46 As he comes still closer to the camera, his sister's face peeps out from a small slot in the middle of the frame.

The Cheat

3.47–3.49 Light from a single, powerful spotlight offscreen left creates a dramatic silhouette on a translucent wall after the villain is shot in *The Cheat.*

technique was Cecil B. De Mille's *The Cheat* (1915; **3.47–3.49**), which utilized arc lamps derived from the theater. By the end of the 1910s and the early 1920s, large film studios boasted a great array of different types of lamps for every purpose.

As feature films became standardized, Hollywood filmmakers established firmer guidelines for creating intelligible plots. These guidelines have changed little since then. Hollywood plots consist of clear chains of causes and effects, and most of these involve character psychology (as opposed to social or natural forces). Each major character is given a set of comprehensible, consistent traits. The Hollywood protagonist is typically goal-oriented, trying to achieve success in work, sports, or some other activity. The hero's goal conflicts with the desires of other characters, creating a struggle that is resolved only at the end—which is typically a happy one.

Hollywood films usually intensify interest by presenting two interdependent plotlines. Almost inevitably one of these involves romance, which gets woven in with the protagonist's quest to achieve a goal. The plot also arouses suspense through deadlines, escalating conflicts, and last-minute rescues. These principles of storytelling have contributed to the enduring international popularity of American films.

Films and Filmmakers

During this period, the big Hollywood firms grew enormously. Feature-length films (running on average about seventy-five minutes) dominated exhibition by 1915. The studios competed to sign up the most popular actors to long-term contracts. Some stars, such as Mary Pickford and Charles Chaplin, were making thousands, even tens

of thousands, of dollars a week by the end of the decade. Studios also bought the rights to many famous literary works and adapted them as vehicles for their stars.

The huge expansion of American production required many directors. Some of these had begun working earlier, but a younger generation entered the cinema profession as well.

Thomas H. Ince and D. W. Griffith

Thomas H. Ince is chiefly remembered for his success as an independent producer. He made studio filmmaking more efficient by preparing detailed scripts that would control all phases of production. What was called a "continuity script," later known as a shooting script, was a shot-by-shot description of the action, with indications of costumes, settings, props, and sometimes lighting.

Having one paper record of all these elements allowed the cast and crew to coordinate their work smoothly. As stories became more complex and the continuity style of filmmaking demanded more shots, the continuity script could provide a blueprint of the finished film. During shooting, the director and cinematographer could write into the script any extra shots they made, and so the editor would know where the footage should be inserted.

Ince had directed short films early in the 1910s, and he made one of several pacifist features that appeared before America's entry into the Great War. *Civilization* (1916, codirected with two others) sets its story in a mythical kingdom ruled by a warmongering tyrant. Christ enters the resurrected body of a young pacifist who died in battle and converts the king with a message of peace (**3.50**). This was Ince's last directorial effort, and he concentrated on producing—including most of the Westerns of William S. Hart—until his death in 1924.

In 1913, D. W. Griffith left the Biograph Company, where he had made more than four hundred short films since 1908. Biograph was reluctant to allow Griffith to make films longer than two reels. Despite the firm's resistance, in the wake of the success of the Italian import *Quo Vadis?*, he completed a four-reel historical epic, *Judith of Bethulia* (1913). But it was his last film for Biograph. During 1914, Griffith made four feature films for Mutual, the independent distribution firm he managed; among these, *The Avenging Conscience* employed fantasy scenes inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" and poem "Annabel Lee."

That same year Griffith was at work on a far more ambitious project. Independently financed from various sources, the twelve-reel *The Birth of a Nation* told an epic tale of the American Civil War by centering on two families who befriend each other but are on opposite sides in the conflict. During Reconstruction, Stoneman, Leader of the House and the head of the northern family, pushes through legislation that gives rights to freed slaves, while the elder son of the southern family helps start the Ku Klux Klan in response to northern policies.

Using many actors from his Biograph days, Griffith created subtle portrayals of the two families. His regular cinematographer, Billy Bitzer, designed shots ranging from epic views of battles to intimate details of the characters' lives (**3.51**). Later scenes expanded Griffith's technique of crosscutting for last-minute rescue situations. The Klan races to save the southern family, trapped in a cabin by attacking blacks, and to free the heroine from the grip of the villainous mulatto leader, who threatens her virtue (**3.52**).

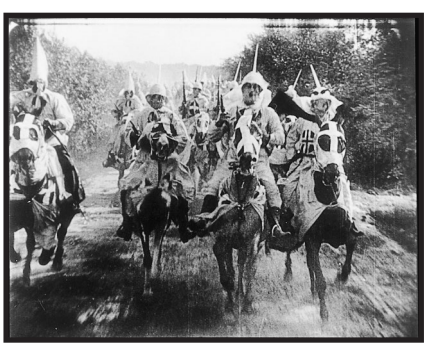
Accompanied by a special orchestral score Griffith had commissioned, the film previewed in Los Angeles and San Francisco and then opened in New York and Boston early in 1915. It played in large legitimate theaters at high prices, was enormously successful, and brought a new respectability to the movies.

Civilization

3.50 The figure of Christ superimposed on a battlefield in the pacifist drama *Civilization.*

The Birth of a Nation

3.51 The southern son's return home is filmed at an oblique angle so that the doorway conceals his mother and sister as they embrace him in *The Birth of a Nation*. Such understatement enhances the emotional power of the moment.



The Birth of a Nation

3.52 In *The Birth of a Nation*, Griffith mounted his camera on a car to create fast tracking shots before the galloping Klan members in the climactic rescue sequence.

Not surprisingly, given its bigoted account of African Americans' role in southern history, *The Birth of a Nation* also aroused heated controversy. Many editorials in white- and black-owned newspapers alike denounced its racism. The film was based on a novel, *The Clansman*, by a well-known racist author, Thomas Dixon. Although Griffith had toned down the worst excesses of the novel in favor of a concentration on the white families, many commentators treated the film as primarily a creation of Dixon.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had been founded in 1909, and the struggle for civil rights was under way by the time the film appeared. Realizing that the artistic qualities of *The Birth of a Nation* made it effective as racist propaganda, NAACP officials pressured the censorship boards in New York and Boston to cut the most offensive scenes or to ban the film outright. Ironically, segregation meant that these NAACP members could not even attend the film in theaters but had to see it at a screening arranged for them.

Supporters of the film won out, however, and *The Birth of a Nation* was exhibited all over the country. Black leaders realized the need for African American–produced films to counter such racism, but funds were lacking. Only somewhat later would films with all-black casts aimed at African American audiences emerge (see Chapter 7).

In his next film, Griffith tried to outdo himself. *Intolerance*, released in 1916, ran roughly three and a half hours. Griffith used an abstract theme, the idea of intolerance through the ages, to link four stories set in different historical epochs: the fall of Babylon, the last part of Christ's life, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France, and a tale of a labor strike and gangster activity in modern-day America. To stress the unchanging nature of intolerance, Griffith intercut the stories rather than telling one after the other. Through much of the film, intertitles and allegorical shots of a woman rocking a cradle signal the shifts among stories. Later, however, as the action in the stories reaches a fever pitch, there are fewer of these transitions, and Griffith daringly experiments by cutting directly among disparate spaces and times (**3.53, 3.54; Video 3.4**). *Intolerance* was also innovative in its cinematography, as when Bitzer mounted the camera on a sliding elevator to create swooping movements over the huge set of the Babylonian court.

Intolerance was not as successful as *The Birth of a Nation*, and Griffith's subsequent features of the 1910s were less experimental. Griffith went on location to film war footage for *Hearts of the World* (1918), a story set in a French village during World War I. He made delightful rural love stories with *A Romance of Happy Valley* and *True Heart Susie* (both 1919) and a drama that used unusual hazy soft-focus cinematography, *Broken Blossoms* (1919).

Intolerance

3.53, 3.54 In *Intolerance*, Griffith boldly cut directly from galloping chariots in the Babylonian story to a speeding train in the modern story.

Griffith was the most famous director of this era. He quickly came to be credited with innovating most of the major film techniques—something he encouraged in publicizing himself. Until recently, some historians have treated *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance* as almost the only important American films of this period. Without detracting from Griffith's prestige, however, we should realize that many excellent filmmakers worked during this era, some of whose work has been discovered only in recent decades. (See "Notes and Queries" online.)

A New Generation of Directors

Griffith managed to keep considerable control over his productions, despite the growing supervision of the studio producers. Other directors who began working in this era also became powerful creative figures. In 1914, Maurice Tourneur emigrated from France and became known as a distinctive filmmaker with a strong sense of pictorial beauty. One of his first American films, *The Wishing Ring* (1914), was subtitled "An Idyll of Old England." It is a fanciful story of a poor girl who naively believes that a ring a gypsy has given her is magical. She tries to use it to reconcile a local earl and his estranged son. Tourneur created a remarkable atmosphere of a rustic English village, even though the entire film was made in New Jersey.

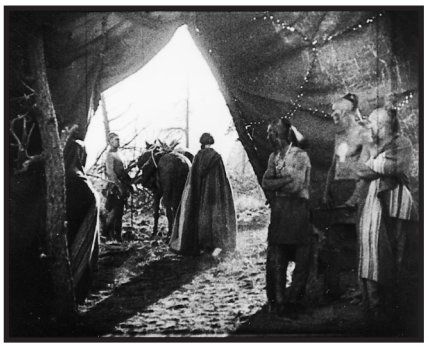
Tourneur was one of the many filmmakers testing the expressive possibilities of the film medium during this era. In 1918, he experimented with using modernist theatrical set design in *The Blue Bird* and *Prunella*, though these were less popular than most of his films of the 1910s. He

also made some intelligent adaptations, including *Victory* (1919, from Joseph Conrad's novel) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1920, codirected with Clarence Brown). The latter, often considered his finest film, fully displays Tourneur's visual style, including his characteristic use of foreground shapes silhouetted against a landscape, often framed in a cave or doorway (**3.55**). During the 1920s, Tourneur increasingly had trouble retaining control over his productions as the studio system grew, and he returned to Europe in 1926.

Unlike Tourneur, Cecil B. De Mille survived within the studio system and managed to control his own productions throughout a long and prolific career. De Mille is often thought of today primarily for his historical epics of the sound era, but during his early career, he made many innovative films in various genres. *The Cheat* and several other pictures he made in 1915 were influential in popularizing directional, selective lighting (see 3.47–3.49). De Mille made a number of unpretentious, well-acted period films during the mid-1910s, including *The Warrens of Virginia* (1915) and *The Girl of the Golden West* (1916). In 1918, he made *Male and Female*, adapted from J. M. Barrie's play *The Admirable Crichton* and starring Gloria Swanson. The enormous success of this film led De Mille to concentrate on romantic comedies, often set in sophisticated society. His films of the 1920s became more extravagant, exploiting elaborate sets and fashionable costumes.

One of America's most prolific female directors, Lois Weber, came to prominence in the 1910s. Having started in films in 1908 as an actress and scenarist, she was directing by 1911, often alongside her husband Phillips Smalley. Few of their early films survive, but *Suspense* (1913) displays a remarkable visual inventiveness (**3.56**). It earns its title by crosscutting between a thug breaking into an isolated house and a husband racing to rescue his wife and baby. Weber went on to direct features on her own, mostly literary adaptations and films on social themes, notably *The Blot* (1921). Like Tourneur, Weber gradually lost independent control of her work and directly only sporadically from 1923 to 1934. When her career ended, she had directed more than a hundred films.

Other major Hollywood directors also began their careers in the 1910s. Actor Raoul Walsh, who had directed several two-reel films, made an impressive feature debut in 1915 with *Regeneration*, a realistic story set in a slum milieu (**3.57**). John Ford began making low-budget Westerns in 1917 and directed dozens of them over the next few years. Unfortunately, nearly all are lost, but two surviving films, *Straight Shooting* (1917) and *Hell Bent* (1918), indicate that Ford had a rare feeling for landscape (**3.58**) and a flexible understanding of the continuity system from the beginning.


The Last of the Mohicans

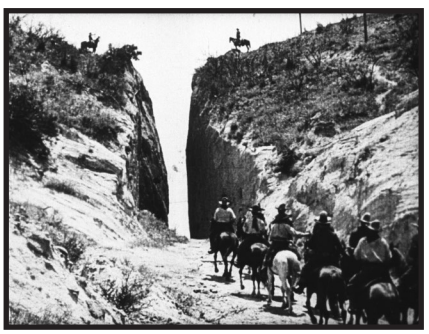
3.55 Tourneur used a tent opening to create a dynamic composition for a dramatic moment in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Suspense

3.56 In *Suspense*, police are glimpsed in a rear-view mirror as they try to capture the hero, who has stolen a car in his desperate attempt to save his family.

Regeneration

3.57 *Regeneration* vividly depicts the atmosphere of drunkenness and petty crime in which its hero is trapped.


Straight Shooting

3.58 From the beginning of his career, John Ford used roads, rock formations, and silhouettes against the sky to create dramatic vistas of the Old West, as in this image from *Straight Shooting*.

Slapstick Comedies and Westerns

Some of the most popular directors and stars of this era specialized in slapstick comedy. Once feature films were standardized, they were typically shown on a program that included shorts, such as comedies, newsreels, and cartoons. Among the most successful comedy shorts were the films of producer-director Mack Sennett. He headed the

Keystone company, which used a great deal of fast action, including chases with the bumbling "Keystone Kops." His stable of comic stars, who often directed their own pictures, included Charlie Chaplin, Ben Turpin, and Mabel Normand (**3.59**).

Chaplin, an English music-hall performer, became an international star with Keystone, going on to direct his own films at Essanay, Mutual, and First National over the course of the 1910s. Chaplin's style was notable for his imaginative use of objects, as in *The Pawnshop* (1916), where he gauges the value of a clock by listening to its ticking with a stethoscope. His dexterity led to many elaborately choreographed fights, chases, and mix-ups, such as the breakneck shenanigans on roller skates in *The Rink* (1916). In a few of his films, such as *The Vagabond* (1916) and *The Immigrant* (1917, **3.60**), Chaplin also introduced an element of pathos rare in slapstick films. Chaplin's "Little Tramp," with his bowler, cane, and oversized shoes, was soon one of the most widely recognized figures in the world.

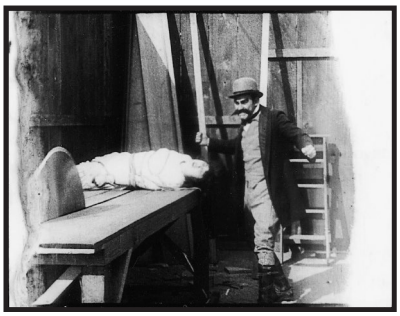
One of Sennett's rivals was Hal Roach, who produced films with the young Harold Lloyd. Although Lloyd's initial series character, "Lonesome Luke," was basically an imitation of Chaplin, he soon donned a pair of dark-rimmed glasses and developed his own persona (**3.61**). Other comics of the period included Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle and his sidekick Buster Keaton, who would come into his own as a star in the 1920s.

The Western also continued to be popular during the 1910s. William S. Hart, one of its most prominent stars, had been a stage actor and did not enter films until he was nearly fifty. His age, plus his lean face, allowed him to play weather-beaten, world-weary roles. His characters were often criminals or men with shady pasts; the plots frequently involved his redemption by love. As a result, Hart's persona became known as the "good bad man," an approach taken up by many subsequent Western stars (**3.62**). His worn clothing and other realistic touches gave Hart's Westerns a sense of historical authenticity.

Another cowboy star of this period was in many ways Hart's opposite. Tom Mix came out of a background of rodeos and Wild West shows. His films were less realistic than Hart's and emphasized fast action, fancy riding, and stunts. After years of making low-budget shorts for Selig, Mix moved to Fox in 1917 and soon became the most popular cowboy star of the late silent era.

One event at the end of this decade indicates the importance that major stars and directors had assumed by this time. In 1919, three of the most popular actors—Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Charles Chaplin—joined the leading director D. W. Griffith in establishing a new firm, United Artists. This was a prestigious distribution company, dealing only in films that these four produced independently. (Later, other independent producers and stars, such as Samuel Goldwyn and Buster Keaton, also distributed through United Artists.) Although Griffith had to drop out a few years later, the new firm did give some stars and producers a degree of control that was not available to those who worked for the big studios.

The development of the Hollywood studio system and the accompanying American takeover of world film



Mabel's Awful Mistake

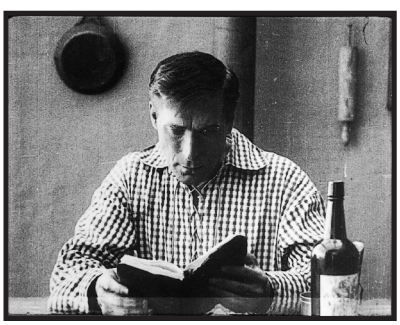
3.59 Keystone comedies often parodied conventional melodramas, as when villain Ford Sterling threatens to saw Mabel Normand in half in *Mabel's Awful Mistake* (1913, Mack Sennett). The white streaks at the sides are nitrate deterioration.

The Immigrant

3.60 Aboard ship in *The Immigrant*, Chaplin and his fellow working-class European passengers react to their first sight of the Statue of Liberty.

The City Slicker

3.61 *The City Slicker* (1918) displays Harold Lloyd's typical persona, a brash young fellow in spectacles and a straw hat.



Hell's Hinges

3.62 The protagonist of *Hell's Hinges* (1916, William S. Hart and Charles Swickard) epitomizes Hart's "good-bad man" character, as he reads the Bible given to him by the heroine—with a bottle of whiskey at his elbow.

markets were among the most influential changes in cinema history. The events of the 1910s defined standard commercial filmmaking. Some of the US companies that began in this era are still making and distributing films. The division of labor into specialized tasks has been refined and continues to the present day. The star system remains one of the primary means of appealing to audiences, and directors still coordinate the process of filmmaking. The basic principles of the classical Hollywood style of filmmaking have changed remarkably little. For better or worse, during this era, *Hollywood* and *the movies* became almost synonymous for audiences around the world.

Streamlining American Animation

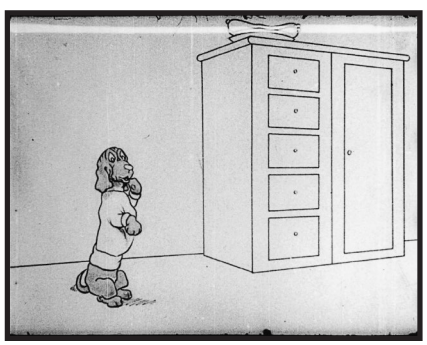
As the labor involved in live-action filmmaking was being divided, animated filmmaking was becoming standardized. Several filmmakers realized that cartoons could be made more economically and quickly using an assembly-line system. The main animator could design and supervise the work while subsidiary workers drew most of the pictures needed for the film's movement. In addition, during the 1910s, technical innovations speeded up the process of animation: the mechanical printing of background settings, the use of transparent cels, and the slash technique of drawing action.

Early animators such as Émile Cohl and Winsor McCay worked by making huge numbers of drawings (see Chapter 2). McCay had an assistant to trace the unmoving background settings onto sheets of paper. In 1913, John Randolph Bray devised a method of mechanizing the process of animation: he printed the same background on many sheets of paper, then animated painted shapes on top of that background to create *The Artist's Dream* (**3.63**).

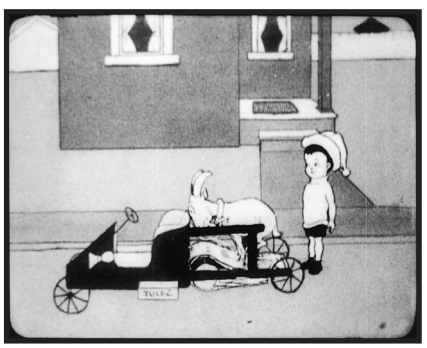
In December 1914, Bray started his own animation studio, hiring a young man named Earl Hurd. That same month, Hurd applied for a patent on the idea of drawing the moving figures in animated cartoons on sheets of transparent celluloid. (The individual sheets are called *cels*, giving rise to the term *cel animation.*) This technique meant that each moving portion could be redrawn bit by bit on separate cels while the same background painting was used under all of them. Hurd's "Bobby Bumps" series were among the most popular cartoons of the decade (**3.64**).

During this same period, Raoul Barré developed the *slash system* of animation. A figure would be drawn on paper, and then the portion of the body that moved would be cut away and redrawn on the sheet of paper below the remaining portion of the figure. To keep the shapes steady on the screen when moving portions were redrawn, Barré proposed steadying the sheets of paper on a pair of pegs at the top of the drawing. This peg system of registration remained central to cel animation, because it allows cels drawn by different animators to fit together smoothly. During 1915, Barré used the slash system to create a brief series of "Animated Grouch Chasers" for the Edison Company. These were live-action shorts with embedded animated sequences (**3.65**).

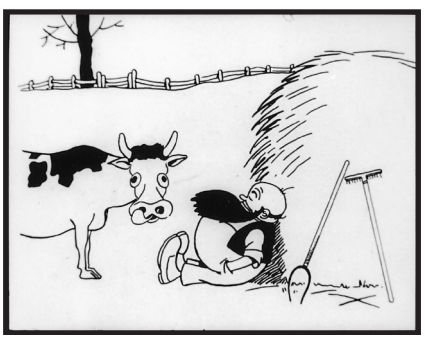
During the 1910s, animation was done by independent firms that sold the distribution rights to their films. Cartoons were sometimes among the shorts shown on programs before features. During the 1920s, thanks in part to the labor-saving devices developed during the 1910s, animated shorts would become a much more regular element of movie programs.



3.63 In *The Artist's Dream* (1913), the animated dog is painted onto a background setting printed on a series of sheets of paper.



3.64 A frame from *Bobby Bumps and His Goatmobile* (1917), in which the moving figures are drawn on transparent celluloid sheets placed over a single painting of the setting.



3.65 An Edison cartoon of 1915, *Cartoons in the Hotel*, animated by Barré. The head of the cow has been "slashed" off its body, which remains static, while separate drawings allow the head to move.

TRENDS IN SMALLER PRODUCING COUNTRIES

During the 1910s, many countries began producing fiction films, but unfortunately, it is presently impossible to write adequate histories of such filmmaking practices because few films from minor producing countries survive. The production companies, usually small and often short-lived, seldom could preserve the negatives of their films. In many cases only a few prints were distributed, so the chances of one surviving were slim. Many countries, such as Mexico, India, Colombia, and New Zealand, have only recently established archives to save their cinematic heritage.

Yet most countries have managed to salvage at least a few silent films. On the basis of these, we can make some generalizations about filmmaking in the less prominent producing countries during the silent era.

Firms in such countries had little hope of exporting their films. This meant that they could afford only small budgets, so production values were usually relatively low. Filmmakers concentrated on movies that would appeal primarily to domestic audiences.

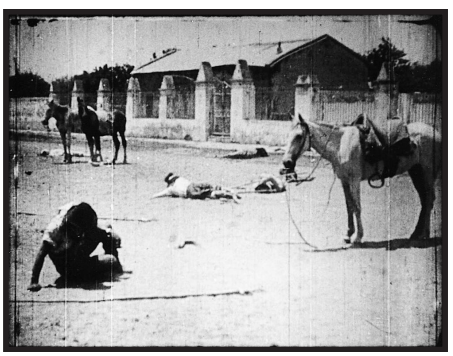
Films made in the smaller producing nations share two general traits. First, many were shot on location. Because production was sporadic, large studio facilities simply did not exist, and filmmakers made a virtue of necessity, exploiting distinctive natural landscapes and local historical buildings for interesting mise-en-scène. Those studio facilities that did exist were small and technologically limited. Little artificial lighting was available, and many interior scenes of this period were shot on simple open-air stages, in sunlight.

Second, filmmakers frequently sought to differentiate their low-budget films from the more polished imported works by using national literature and history as sources for their stories. In many cases, such local appeal worked because audiences wanted at least occasionally to see films that reflected their own cultures. In some cases, these films were novel enough to be exported.

A good example of a film that used these tactics is *The Sentimental Bloke*, perhaps the most important Australian silent film (1919, Raymond Longford). Based on a popular book of dialect verses by Australian author C. J. Dennis, the film presented a working-class romance. The intertitles quoted passages from the poem, and the scenes were shot in the inner-city Woolloomooloo district of Sydney (**3.66**). The film was very popular in Australia. "It is a blessed relief and refreshment," wrote one reviewer, "after much of the twaddlesome picturing and camouflaged lechery of the films that come to us from America."[5] *The Sentimental Bloke* received some distribution in Great Britain, the United States, and other markets—though the local dialect in the intertitles had to be revised so that foreign viewers could understand the story.

Other films of the era drew upon similar appeals. In Argentina, Alcides Greca directed *El último malón* ("The Last Indian Attack," 1917), based on a historical incident of 1904 (**3.67**). Similarly, a 1919 production by the small, newly formed Film Company of Ireland, *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* (released 1920, John MacDonagh), was based on an Irish novel by William Carleton, which in turn was based on traditional ballads and events of the Catholic-Protestant conflicts of 1745. Many of the film's scenes were filmed outdoors in the Irish countryside. Some interior scenes were also shot outdoors (**3.68**). In 1919, the Canadian producer Ernest Shipman made a film called *Back to God's Country* (director, David M. Hartford). The screenplay was written by Nell Shipman, the film's star, who in the 1920s became a notable independent producer and director. Much of the film was made in the Canadian wilderness, and the story stressed the heroine's love of animals and natural landscapes (**3.69**). Again, the distinctive Canadian subject matter and scenery made the film successful abroad.

The Sentimental Bloke


Ul Ultimo Malon

3.66, *left* A meeting between the hero and heroine of *The Sentimental Bloke*, staged in a Sydney street with ordinary urban activities occurring in the background.

3.67, *right* The staging of a historical battle on location gives a nearly documentary quality to some scenes of *El último malón.*

Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn

Back to God's Country

3.68, *left* A set representing the interior of a tenant cottage, shot on an open-air stage in full daylight, in *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn.*

3.69, *right* Nell Shipman and a bear on location in the Canadian wilderness in *Back to God's Country.*

The strategies of using national subject matter and exploiting picturesque local landscapes have remained common in countries with limited production to the present day.

The 1910s, then, were a crucial transitional period for the cinema. International explorations of storytelling techniques and stylistic expressivity led to a cinema that was surprisingly close to what we know today. Early as they are, the films of the mid-to-late 1910s resemble modern movies much more than they do the novelty-oriented short subjects made only a few years earlier.

Similarly, the postwar international situation in the film industry would have long-range consequences. By 1919, Hollywood dominated world markets, and most countries had to struggle to compete with it, either by imitating its films or by finding alternative storytelling methods. The Swedish filmmakers had created a powerful national cinema, but it was too small to make real headway against the Americans after the war. Russia's distinctive film style was cut off by the 1917 Russian Revolution. The struggle against Hollywood domination would shape much of what happened within national film industries for decades to come.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Yuri Tsivian, "Some Preparatory Remarks on Russian Cinema," in Tsivian, ed., *Silent Witnesses: Russian Films 1908–1919* (London: British Film Institute, 1989), p. 24.
2. Quoted in Richard Abel, *French Cinema: The First Wave, 1915–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 10.
3. Ron Mottram, *The Danish Cinema before Dreyer* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1988), p. 117.
4. Louis Delluc, "Cinema: *The Outlaw and His Wife*," (1919) in Richard Abel, ed., *French Film Theory and Criticism 1907–1939*, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 188.
5. Quoted in Graham Shirley and Brian Adams, *Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years* (Australia: Angus & Robertson Publishers and Currency Press, 1983), p. 56.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On the great films of 1913: "Lucky '13"

On Evgenii Bauer's style: "Watching movies very, very slowly"

On early continuity style in William S. Hart films: "Rio Jim, in discrete fragments"

On American filmmakers of the 1910s: "Anybody but Griffith"

On film noir in the 1910s: "Film noir, a hundred years ago"

On *Fantômas*: "How to watch FANTÔMAS, and why"

On Douglas Fairbanks: "His majesty the American, leaping for the moon"

On 1917 as a key year for Hollywood's classical style: "Happy birthday, classical cinema!"

On Ford's *Straight Shooting*: "John Ford, silent man"

On German films of the 1910s: "Homunculus and his friends"

On American film style: "Wayward ways and roads not taken"

On European films of 1919: "A hundred years ago, and less, at Cinema Ritrovato '19"

On an Italian film of 1919: "Sometimes an actor's back..."

PART
TWO

THE LATE SILENT ERA, 1919–1929

Although classical Hollywood form and style have been pervasive since the 1910s, we shall find alternative approaches to filmmaking in other periods and places. So far we have looked at styles associated with a single filmmaker (such as Georges Méliès or D. W. Griffith), with a company (such as Pathé), with a general trend (such as precision staging), or with a national industry (such as the huge Hollywood cinema or the small Swedish production). Some groups of films belong to a unified *movement*. A movement involves several filmmakers, working for a limited period and usually in a single country, whose films share significant formal and stylistic traits.

One broad trend in the arts began in the late nineteenth century and was causing a great ferment as the cinema was spreading. This trend has been labeled *modernism*. It signaled a major shift in cultural attitudes that arose largely as a response to modern life—the late phases of the Industrial Revolution, especially the new modes of transportation and communication that were swiftly transforming people's lives. Telephones, automobiles, and airplanes were considered great advances, yet they also seemed threatening, especially in their capacity to be used in warfare.

Photography, in particular, revolutionized the visual arts. Photographs could provide realistic portraits and show landscapes and cityscapes in enormous detail. Many painters moved away from the traditions of realism, portraiture, and subjects drawn from history and classical myth. A new value was placed on experimentation and even shock value. The many movements that arose during the early twentieth century can all loosely be summed up as *avant-garde*. These new styles, which originated primarily in Europe, rejected the realistic depiction of a concrete world.

Consider just painting. The first modernist movement appeared in France during the nineteenth century and was termed Impressionism. Its practitioners abandoned painting the solid, permanent appearance of things

The Kid

and instead attempted to capture the fleeting patterns of light and shadow as they struck the eye.

During the early twentieth century, other modernist trends in painting quickly arose. Fauvism in France encouraged the use of bold colors and exaggerated shapes to elicit strong emotions rather than serene contemplation. Other French painters more coolly depicted several sides of objects, as if they were being seen in an impossible space from several viewpoints at once. This movement became known as Cubism. Beginning in 1908, proponents of German Expressionism attempted to express raw, extreme emotions, in painting through garish colors and distortion and in theater through emphasized gestures, loud declamation of lines, staring eyes, and choreographed movements.

The 1910s saw the beginnings of abstract painting, pioneered by Wassily Kandinsky and quickly spreading internationally. The Italian Futurists tried to capture the hectic pace of modern life by rendering the swirl and blur of movement. In Russia and, after the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union, some artists championed purely abstract compositions of simple shapes, a style known as Suprematism. In the 1920s, as Lenin called for swift industrial progress, Soviet artists based their works around the machine in a movement termed Constructivism.

In France during the 1920s, practitioners of Surrealism favored bizarre, irrational, artfully contrived juxtapositions of objects and actions. Going even further, the Dadaists advocated purely random mixtures of elements in artworks, reflecting what they saw as the madness of the postwar world. All these styles, along with modernist movements and trends in literature, drama, and music, created a radical break with traditional realism in a remarkably short time. The modernist tradition would shape all the arts throughout much of the twentieth century.

Given the liveliness and prominence of these modernist movements, it is not surprising that they sometimes influenced the cinema. The years from 1918 to 1933 saw an astonishing variety of explorations in alternative film styles. No fewer than three avant-garde movements arose within commercial industries and flourished briefly: French Impressionism (1918–1929), German Expressionism (1920–1927), and Soviet Montage (1925–1933). Moreover, the 1920s saw the beginnings of an independent experimental cinema—including Surrealism, Dadaism, and abstract films.

There are many reasons for such intense, varied activity in this period. One of the most important involves the new prominence of American cinema as a stylistic and commercial force. Chapters 2 and 3 described the establishment of the narrative and stylistic premises of the classical Hollywood cinema during the 1910s. We also saw how the wartime decline in European production allowed American firms to expand into world markets.

After the war, widely differing situations existed in other producing nations, but all faced one common factor: a need to compete with Hollywood in the local market. In some countries, such as Great Britain, such competition usually involved imitating Hollywood films. Other national cinemas not only followed this strategy but also encouraged filmmakers to experiment, in the hope that innovative films could challenge the Hollywood product. Some postwar avant-garde films became successful, partly on the basis of their novelty.

Many of the institutions we now consider integral parts of the film world first came into being then. For example, the specialized film journal, publishing theoretical and analytical articles, arose in France in the 1910s and proliferated internationally over the next decade. Similarly, the earliest groups of enthusiasts devoted to alternative cinema were formed—taking their name, "ciné-clubs," from French groups that started the trend. Until the mid-1920s, there were no theaters devoted to the showing of art films. Whether a theater was large or small, first-run or second-run, it showed ordinary commercial films. Gradually, however, the "little cinema" movement spread, again beginning in France. Such theaters catered to a small but loyal portion of the public interested in foreign and avant-garde films. Finally, the first conferences and exhibitions devoted to the cinema as an art were held during the 1920s.

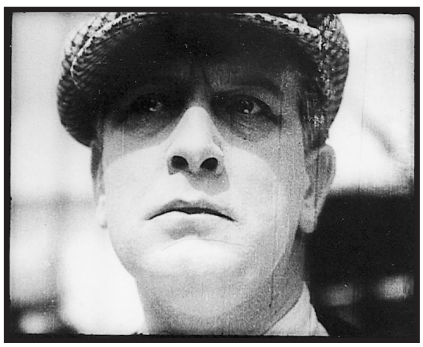
Many of the circumstances that allow any film movement to come into being, however, are unique to its time and place. No single set of circumstances will predictably give rise to a movement. Indeed, as we shall see in Chapters 4 to 6, the conditions in France, Germany, and the Soviet Union differed vastly in the postwar era.

We go on to examine Hollywood in the 1920s, a period during which it continued to expand and to polish the classical storytelling style developed during the previous decade (Chapter 7). Finally, we look at international trends of this period, including efforts to resist Hollywood competition and attempts to create an international experimental cinema (Chapter 8).

CHAPTER 4

La Dixième Symphonie

FRANCE IN THE 1920s



Menilmontant

THE FRENCH FILM INDUSTRY AFTER WORLD WAR I

French film production declined during World War I, when many resources were drained away to support the fighting. Moreover, American films poured into France. In the years immediately following the war's end, only 20 to 30 percent of films screened there were French, with Hollywood supplying most of the rest.

French producers faced an uphill struggle in trying to regain their prewar strength. French companies released fewer than 100 features per year, while Germany routinely turned out more than 200 and the United States more than 500. Throughout the 1920s, production remained in a crisis.

Competition from Imports

What created the problems confronting French film production between 1918 and 1928? For one thing, imported films continued to dominate France in the 1920s. American films were the most numerous, especially early in the decade. Even though America's share declined steadily throughout the mid-to-late 1920s, other countries, primarily Germany and Great Britain, gained ground faster than did France (see chart in Competition from Imports).

The situation for exports was little better. The domestic French market itself was relatively small, and films seldom could recover their costs without going abroad. Foreign films, however, were difficult to place in the lucrative American market, and only a tiny number of French films had any success there during this period. With American films dominating most other markets, the French depended largely on areas that already had cultural exchange with France, such as Belgium, Switzerland, and

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF FEATURES	PERCENT RELEASED IN FRANCE			
		FRENCH	AMERICAN	GERMAN	OTHER
1924	693	9.8	85	2.9	2.3
1925	704	10.4	82	4 .1	3.5
1926	565	9.7	78.6	5.8	5.9
1927	581	12.7	63.3	15.7	8.3
1928	583	16.1	53.7	20.9	9.3
1929	438	11.9	48.2	29.7	10.2

French colonies in Africa and Southeast Asia. Companies were willing to experiment to find a distinctively French cinema able to compete at home and abroad. Several directors central to the fledgling French Impressionist movement—Abel Gance, Marcel L'Herbier, Germaine Dulac, and Jean Epstein—made their early films for large firms.

Disunity within the Film Industry

French production was also hampered by disunity. Before World War I, two big companies, Pathé and Gaumont, controlled the film industry. After the war, both cut back severely on production, the riskiest sector of the industry, and concentrated instead on surer profits from distribution and exhibition. The largest French firms backed off from vertical integration just when vertically integrated firms were strengthening the Hollywood industry.

France's production sector consisted of a few large- and medium-sized firms and many smaller companies. Often a director or star would raise money for a film, and if that film failed, the company went out of business or struggled along for another film or two. This artisanal strategy offered little hope for competing with Hollywood. In addition, most films had low budgets. Even by the late 1920s, when the industry was doing somewhat well, one expert estimated the average cost of a feature to be between $30,000 and $40,000—one-tenth the budget of an average American feature.

Just as bad, because of the lack of an oligopoly and vertical integration, the production sector's interests clashed with those of the exhibitors and distributors. Pathé, Gaumont, and the other established firms owned only 10 to 15 percent of French cinemas. The independent theater owners wanted to screen what would bring the biggest audience—usually, American imports. And often an American film was cheaper to rent than a French one. Responding to exhibitors' demands, the distributors provided Hollywood films.

Producers repeatedly called for the government to limit imported films. Inevitably, however, the more powerful distributors and exhibitors, who made most of their money on imports, opposed any quota, and they typically won out. Despite some minor measures to limit importation in the late 1920s, a strong quota was not passed until the 1930s.

Not only did the government fail to protect producers from foreign competition, it also assailed the industry with high taxes on movie tickets. During the 1920s, these taxes ran anywhere from 6 to 40 percent, depending on a theater's size and income. Such taxes hurt every level of the industry because exhibitors could not risk losing patrons by raising admission prices and they could not pay as much to the distributors and producers of the films.

Outdated Production Facilities

To make matters worse, technical facilities were outdated. As in other European countries, French producers depended on the glass studios built before the war. The lack of capital investment hampered companies in reequipping these studios to catch up with the technological innovations American firms had made during the 1910s, particularly in lighting (see The Classical Hollywood Cinema).

As a result, French filmmakers were unaccustomed to using artificial lighting extensively. In the late teens, French visitors to Hollywood were awed by the vast lighting systems. As director Henri Diamant-Berger observed in early 1918, "Lighting effects are sought and achieved in America by the addition of strong light sources, and not, as in France, by the suppression of other sources. In America, lighting effects are created; in France, shadow effects are created."[1] That is, French filmmakers typically start with sunlight and block off parts of the light to create dark patches within the set. American filmmakers had more flexibility, eliminating sunlight altogether and creating exactly the effects they wanted with artificial light.

There were some attempts to bring this kind of control to French filmmaking. In 1919, director Louis Mercanton rigged up portable lighting equipment to take on location for his realist filmmaking. For the epic *The Three Musketeers* (1921–1922), Henri Diamant-Berger installed American-style overhead lighting in a studio at Vincennes (**4.1**). Modern lighting technology became increasingly available during the 1920s, but it remained too expensive for widespread use.

The Three Musketeers

4.1 American-style, three-point lighting in *The Three Musketeers*, with a subdued fill light on the set, a key light from off left foreground, and a high back light that picks out the actor against the dark background.

Although some new studios were built, few had extensive backlots of the sort owned by the larger American and German producers. Most studios were in the Parisian suburbs, surrounded by houses rather than by open space. Large sets often had to be constructed in rented studios. Partly as a result of this and partly through a desire for realism, filmmakers continued to go on location more than did their counterparts in Germany or the United States. Chateaus, palaces, and other historic landmarks appear as the backdrops of many French silent films; filmmakers also made a virtue of necessity by using natural landscapes and scenes shot in villages.

MAJOR POSTWAR GENRES AND FILMMAKERS

Despite foreign competition, industry disunity, lack of capital, government indifference, and limited technical resources, the industry produced a variety of films. In most countries, serials declined in prestige during the late teens, but in France, they remained among the most lucrative formats well into the 1920s. Big firms such as Pathé and Gaumont found that a high-budget costume drama or literary adaptation could make a profit only when shown in several parts. Because moviegoers regularly attended their local theater, they were willing to return for all the episodes.

Some serials of the postwar era followed the established pattern, with cliffhanger endings, master criminals, and exotic locales, as in Louis Feuillade's *Tih Minh* (1919). But social pressures against the glorification

L'Agonie des aigles

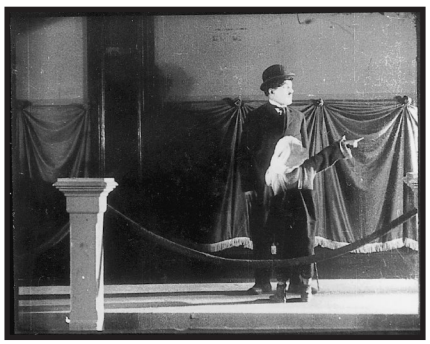
4.2 Some scenes in *L'Agonie des aigles* ("The Agony of the Eagles," 1921), a Pathé film about Napoléon, were shot on location outside Fontainebleau.

of crime and perhaps also a sense that the formula was becoming stale led to changes. Feuillade, whose films were now virtually Gaumont's sole output, turned to serials based on popular sentimental novels with *Les Deux gamines* ("The Two Kids," 1921) and continued in this vein until his death in 1925. Diamant-Berger's fourteen-episode adaptation of *The Three Musketeers* was among the decade's most successful films. Henri Fescourt directed *Mandrin* (1924), whose twelve episodes continued the traditions of abductions, disguises, and rescues in an eighteenth-century setting.

Whether made in serial format or not, many prestigious and expensive productions were historical epics. In many cases, film companies economized by using monuments as settings (**4.2**). Such films were often intended for export. *The Miracle of the Wolves* (1924, Raymond Bernard) was the most lavish French historical film yet made; while its interiors used sets, many scenes were shot in the medieval town of Carcassonne. The film's producer, the Société des Films Historiques, gave it a gala New York run, but, as often happened with such attempts, no American distributor purchased *The Miracle of the Wolves.*

A modest genre was the fantasy film, and its most prominent practitioner was René Clair. His first film, *Paris qui dort* ("Sleeping Paris," aka *The Crazy Ray*, 1924), was a comic story of a mysterious ray that paralyzes Paris. Clair used freeze-frame techniques and unmoving actors to create the sense of an immobile city. Several characters flying above the city escape the ray and proceed to live luxuriously by looting whatever they want; soon they track down the source of the problem and set things moving again. In Clair's *Le Voyage imaginaire* ("The Imaginary Journey," 1926), the hero dreams that he is transported by a witch to a fairyland, created with fancifully painted sets (**4.3**). Such fantasies revived a popular tradition of the early cinema in France, drawing on camera tricks and stylized sets somewhat as Georges Méliès and Gaston Velle had done.

Comedies continued to be popular after the war. Max Linder, who had been lured briefly to Hollywood, returned


Le Voyage imaginaire

Le Petit café

4.3, *left* In *Le Voyage imaginaire*, a waxworks museum comes to life—including figures of Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan as they appeared in Chaplin's 1921 film *The Kid.*

4.4, *right* Max Linder's comic feature *Le Petit café* combines intertitles with live action.

to make comedies in France, including one of the earliest comic features, *Le Petit café* (1919, Raymond Bernard). Linder played a waiter who inherits a large sum of money but must go on working to fulfill his contract; comic scenes follow as he tries to get himself fired. The film's witty touches (**4.4**) made it a surprise hit and helped give the comic genre more respectability in France. Other important comedies were made by Clair, whose *The Italian Straw Hat* (1928) brought him an international fame that would grow in the sound era.

As the war was nearing its end, a distinguished stage producer began making films. From 1887 to 1914, André Antoine had pioneered a new naturalism in theater. He hung beef carcasses in a butcher-shop set and built a gushing fountain for a Sicilian village scene. He also made his actors employ a restrained style. Antoine was almost 60 years old when he moved into cinema with *Les Frères corses* (*The Corsican Brothers*, 1917), and he made eight additional films, ending with *L'Arlésienne* in 1922.

Critics and other filmmakers sometimes dismissed Antoine as old-fashioned and unfamiliar with the principles of filmmaking. The apparent lack of polish and sophistication was, however, deceptive. Nowadays his surviving work is admired for its combination of naturalism and lyricism, a style that has nothing theatrical about it. Antoine shot in French villages and landscapes, and the actors maintained the restraint that the director had developed in his stage career (**4.5**).

La Terra

4.5 In adapting Zola's novel *La Terre*, André Antoine's 1921 film displayed the bleak fields and farms of the Beauce region near Chartres. The village church often provides an ironic backdrop to the tale of greed and cruelty among a rural family.

THE FRENCH IMPRESSIONIST MOVEMENT

Between 1918 and 1929, a new generation of filmmakers sought to explore the cinema as an art. These directors considered French filmmaking stodgy and preferred the lively Hollywood films that had flooded into France during the war. Because their films displayed a fascination with pictorial beauty and an interest in intense psychological exploration, this movement came to be called Impressionism.

The Impressionists' Relation to the Industry

These young filmmakers were aided by the crises that plagued the French industry. Because companies would often shift their policies or reorganize, filmmakers had several financing options. Some Impressionist directors also divided their time between avant-garde projects and more profit-oriented films. Germaine Dulac made some important Impressionist films, including *The Smiling Madame Beudet* and *Gossette* (both 1923), but she spent much of her career making more conventional dramas. Similarly, Jean Epstein directed costume pictures in between some of his most experimental works. Jacques Feyder was among the more commercially successful of French directors in the 1920s, making a huge hit, *L'Atlantide*, in 1921; yet he made Impressionist films from 1923 to 1926. This strategy helped keep the movement going for over a decade.

The first director to depart from established traditions was Abel Gance, who had entered filmmaking in 1911 as a scenarist and then began directing. Aside from making

A Chronology of French Impressionist Cinema

1918	November: Germany and Austria surrender, ending World War I. *La Dixième symphonie* ("The Tenth Symphony"), Abel Gance
1919	Summer: Independent company, Films Abel Gance, is formed. *J'Accuse* ("I Accuse"), Abel Gance *Rose-France,* Marcel L'Herbier
1920	January: Louis Delluc publishes *Le Journal du Ciné-Club,* then starts *Cinéa magazine* in April. *Le Carnaval des vérités* ("Carnival of Truths"), Marcel L'Herbier *L'Homme du large* ("The Man of the Open Sea"), Marcel L'Herbier
1921	*Fièvre* ("Fever"), Louis Delluc *El Dorado,* Marcel L'Herbier
1922	Yermoliev's Russian émigré company becomes Films Albatros. L'Herbier forms an independent production firm, Cinégraphic. *La Femme de nulle part* ("The Woman from Nowhere"), Louis Delluc *La Roue* ("The Wheel"), Abel Gance
1923	*L'Auberge rouge* ("The Red Inn"), Jean Epstein *Don Juan et Faust* ("Don Juan and Faust"), Marcel L'Herbier *La Souriante Madame Beudet (The Smiling Madame Beudet)*, Germaine Dulac *Coeur fidèle* ("Faithful Heart"), Jean Epstein *Crainquebille, Jacques* Feyder *Le Marchand de plaisir* ("The Seller of Pleasure"), Jaque Catelain *Gossette* ("The Little Kid"), Germaine Dulac *Le Brasier ardent* ("The Burning Brazier"), Ivan Mosjoukine and Alexandre Volkoff
1924	March: Louis Delluc dies. *La Galerie des monsters* ("The Freak Show"), Jaque Catelain *L'Inondation* ("The Flood"), Louis Delluc *L'Inhumaine* ("The Inhuman One"), Marcel L'Herbier *Kean,* Alexandre Volkoff *Catherine,* Albert Dieudonné (script by Jean Renoir) *La Belle Nivernaise* ("The Beautiful Nivernaise"), Jean Epstein *L'Ironie du destin* ("The Irony of Destiny"), Dimitri Kirsanoff
1925	*L'Affiche* ("The Poster"), Jean Epstein *Visages d'enfants* ("Children's Faces"), Jacques Feyder *Feu Mathias Pascal* ("The Late Mathias Pascal"), Marcel L'Herbier *La Fille de l'eau* ("The Daughter of the Water"), Jean Renoir
1926	Les Films Jean Epstein is formed. *Gribiche,* Jacques Feyder *Menilmontant,* Dimitri Kirsanoff
1927	*6½ × 11,* Jean Epstein *La Glace à trois faces* ("The Three-Sided Mirror"), Jean Epstein *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* ("Napoléon as Seen by Abel Gance"), Abel Gance
1928	Les Films Jean Epstein goes out of business. L'Herbier's company, Cinégraphic, is absorbed by Cinéromans. *Brumes d'automne* ("Autumn Mists"), Dimitri Kirsanoff *La Chute de la maison Usher (The Fall of the House of Usher)*, Jean Epstein *La Petite marchande d'allumettes (The Little Match Girl)*, Jean Renoir
1929	*L'Argent* ("Money"), Marcel L'Herbier *Finis Terrae* ("The End of the Earth"), Jean Epstein

La Dixième symphonie

4.6 In *La Dixième symphonie*, Gance superimposes a dancer over piano keys to suggest the subjective effect of a musical passage.

an unreleased Méliès-like fantasy, *La Folie du docteur Tube* ("The Madness of Doctor Tube," 1915), he had worked on commercial projects. With a passion for Romantic literature and art, however, Gance aspired to make more personal works. His *La Dixième symphonie* (1918) is the first major film of the Impressionist movement. It concerns a composer who writes a symphony so powerful that his friends consider it a successor to Beethoven's nine symphonies. Gance suggests the listeners' emotional reactions to the score by a series of visual devices (**4.6**). Such attempts to convey sensations and emotional "impressions" would become central to the Impressionist movement.

La Dixième symphonie was produced by Charles Pathé, who continued to finance and distribute Gance's films after the director formed his own production company. This was risky because some Gance films were lengthy and expensive. Yet Gance was the most popular of the Impressionists. In 1920, an informal poll ranked the public's favorite films. The only French productions near the top were by Gance.

The other major firm, Gaumont, was making most of its money from Feuillade serials. It invested some of the profits in a group of films by Marcel L'Herbier, whose debut work, *Rose-France*, was the second Impressionist film. This allegory of war-battered France was so symbolic as to be nearly incomprehensible, and it was not widely seen. Still, L'Herbier made two more Impressionist films, *L'Homme du large* and *El Dorado*, for Gaumont, and by 1920 critics began to notice that France had a cinematic avant-garde.

Jean Epstein, who was to make some of the most experimental of the Impressionist films, began with a quasi-documentary, *Pasteur* (1923), for Pathé. Germaine Dulac was hired to direct her avant-garde character study *The Smiling Madame Beudet* by the Film d'Art company, which originated the project as an adaptation of a recent successful play.

In these early years, the only Impressionist filmmaker who remained at the periphery of the industry was critic and theorist Louis Delluc. Using inherited money and assistance from other filmmakers, he supported the tiny companies that produced his low-budget films like *Fièvre.* A few years later, Jean Renoir, son of painter Auguste Renoir, ventured into different types of avant-garde filmmaking, including Impressionism, supported by his own money (derived in part from selling some of his father's paintings). Another Impressionist filmmaker, Dimitri Kirsanoff, worked with the most limited means of all, scraping together funds without any production company and making inexpensive films such as *L'Ironie du destin* and *Menilmontant.*

One other firm made major contributions to Impressionism in its early years. The Russian production group Yermoliev (see Russia), fleeing the Soviet government's nationalization of the film industry, settled in Paris in 1920 and reorganized as Films Albatros in 1922. At first this firm made popular fantasies, melodramas, and the like. The company's lead actor, Ivan Mosjoukine (who had changed his name from the Russian Mozhukhin), quickly became a major French star. In 1923, Albatros produced one of the most daring of the Impressionist films, *Le Brasier ardent*, codirected by Mosjoukine and Alexandre Volkoff. In 1924, it made *Kean*, directed by Volkoff and starring Mosjoukine. Though a small company, Albatros was profitable, and it also produced Impressionist films by French directors: Epstein worked there in the mid-1920s, and L'Herbier's company coproduced *Feu Mathias Pascal* with Albatros.

The most prolific and successful directors of the movement were able to start their own companies. After his early successes for Pathé, Gance formed Films Abel Gance in 1919 (which became financially independent of Pathé in 1924). After a disagreement with Gaumont over *Don Juan et Faust* in 1922, L'Herbier formed Cinégraphic. This firm produced most of L'Herbier's subsequent 1920s work and also financed Delluc's *L'Inondation* and two Impressionist films directed by L'Herbier's main actor, Jaque Catelain. Epstein formed Les Films Jean Epstein in 1926 and kept it going for two years, during which time he made some of the Impressionist movement's most daring films. Independent production enabled the Impressionists to push their experiments further.

Impressionist Theory

The style of the Impressionist movement derived partly from the directors' beliefs about the cinema as an art form.

They expressed these beliefs in poetic, often abstruse, essays and manifestos.

The Impressionists saw art as a form of expression, conveying the personal vision of the artist: art creates an experience, and that experience leads to emotions for the spectator. Art creates these feelings not by making direct statements but by evoking or suggesting them. In short, artworks create fleeting feelings, or impressions. By the 1920s, this view of art was a bit old-fashioned, being rooted in nineteenth-century Romantic and Symbolist aesthetics.

Cinema and the Other Arts Sometimes Impressionist theorists claimed that the cinema is a synthesis of the other arts. It creates spatial relationships, as architecture, painting, and sculpture do. Because cinema is also a temporal art, however, it combines its spatial qualities with rhythmic relationships comparable to those of music, poetry, and dance. On the other hand, Impressionist theorists also treated the cinema as a pure medium, presenting unique possibilities to the artist. This claim led some filmmakers to advocate making only *cinéma pur* ("pure cinema"), abstract films that concentrated on graphic and temporal form, often with no narrative (see Chapter 8). Most Impressionists took a less radical course, making narrative films that explored the medium of cinema.

Whether a given writer claimed that films synthesized the older arts or created a totally new art form, all theorists agreed that film is the opposite of theater. They condemned much French production as mere imitation of the stage, believing that in order to avoid theatricality, films should display naturalistic acting. And indeed, the acting in many Impressionist films is strikingly restrained. Similarly, the Impressionists preferred location shooting to artificial sets, and their films contain many evocative landscapes and authentic village scenes.

Photogénie and Rhythm In trying to define the nature of the film image, the Impressionists often referred to the concept of *photogénie*, a term that indicates something more than being "photogenic." For them, photogénie was the basis of cinema. Louis Delluc popularized the term around 1918, using it to define that quality that distinguishes a film shot from the original object photographed. The process of filming, according to Delluc, lends an object a new expressiveness by giving the viewer a fresh perception of it.

Kirsanoff wrote, "Each thing existing in the world knows another existence on the screen."[2] It sounds a bit mystical, but it seems that photogénie is created by the properties of the camera. Framing isolates objects from their environment, black-and-white film stock transforms their appearance, special optical effects further change them, and so on. By such means, Impressionist theorists believed, the cinema gives us access to a realm beyond everyday experience. It shows us the souls of people and the essences of objects.

With respect to film form, the Impressionists insisted that cinema should not imitate theatrical or literary narratives. They also argued that film form should be based on *visual rhythm*. This idea stems from the Impressionists' belief that emotions, rather than stories, should be the basis for films. The rhythm arises from the careful juxtaposition of the movements within the shots and the lengths of the shots themselves. In a lecture, Germaine Dulac analyzed the rhythm of a moment in Marcel Silver's *L'Horloge* ("The Clock," 1924) in which a calm love scene abruptly ends as the pair realize they must return home immediately:

> The excitement begins once the thought of the clock suddenly shatters their happy musing. From then on, the images succeed each other in a mad rhythm. The throbbing vision of the pendulum contrasted with the two lovers rushing toward one another creates the drama. . . . Short images . . . the sensation of the long road the two lovers must traverse, and the obsessiveness punctuating the action. Interminable paths, a still imperceptible village. The pendulum is emphasized insofar as the author wants to give us the sense of distance in the other shots. By the choice of images, their length, and their contrasts, rhythm becomes the sole source of emotion.[3]

For the Impressionists, rhythm was central, offering a way to emphasize the characters' reactions to story action rather than focusing solely on the action itself. The Impressionists insisted that their attention to rhythm put their films closer to music than to any other art form.

Stylistic Traits of Impressionism

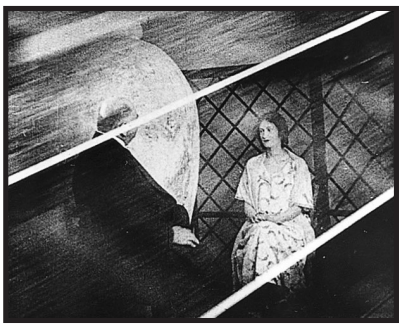
These assumptions about the nature of cinema shaped the Impressionist films' style and narrative structure. Most important, filmic techniques often function to convey character subjectivity. This subjectivity includes mental images, such as visions, dreams, or memories; optical point-of-view (POV) shots; and characters' perceptions of events rendered without POV shots. Though films in all countries had used such devices as superimpositions and flashbacks to show characters' thoughts or feelings, the Impressionists went much further in this direction.

La Roue

4.7 Gance's *La Roue* contains many oval and round masks to change the rectangular shape of the image.

Rose-France

4.8 In L'Herbier's *Rose-France*, an elaborate mask divides the frame into three images, centering the heroine as if in a traditional triptych painting.

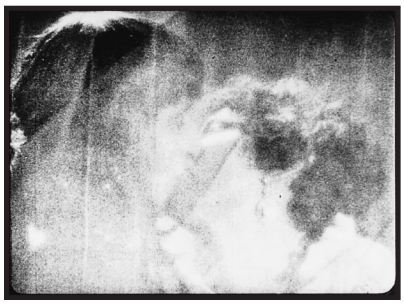


Feu Mathias Pascal

4.9 As the hero of L'Herbier's *Feu Mathias Pascal* sits in a moving train, we see what he is thinking through a series of images of his village and family, superimposed over the moving train tracks.

El Dorado

4.10, 4.11 A filter creates a subjective effect in *El Dorado.*



Napoléon

4.12 Filters achieve a subjective effect in the wedding-night scene in *Napoléon.*

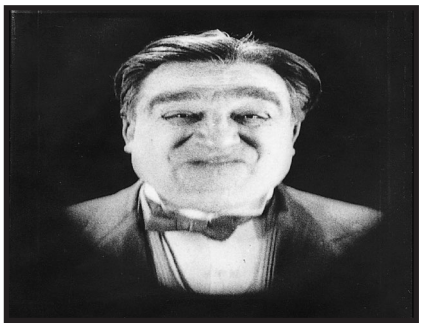
Devices of the Camera As we have just seen, the Impressionists were concerned about enhancing the photogénie of their films. Because of this, and because of their interest in character subjectivity, many of the Impressionists' innovations involve camerawork. Most obviously, Impressionist films frequently contain *optical devices* that affect the look of the photographic image.

Such optical devices might be present to enhance the image by making it more striking or beautiful (**4.7**, **4.8**). More often, though, optical tricks convey characters' impressions. *Superimpositions* may convey a character's thought or memories (**4.9**). A *filter* placed over the lens may function to suggest subjectivity, usually without the shot's being taken from the character's optical point of view.

In L'Herbier's *El Dorado*, the heroine is a performer in a Spanish cabaret. While onstage, she worries about her sick son, and her distraction is suggested by a filter that blurs her figure but not the women around her (**4.10**). As the other women snap her out of her reverie, the filter disappears and she comes into sharp view (**4.11**). Here the feelings conveyed are those of the heroine, and the shot is not taken from anyone's point of view. In Gance's *Napoléon*, the passion of Napoléon and Josephine as they kiss on their wedding night is conveyed by a series of gauze filters that drop one by one between the couple and the lens, gradually blurring the screen to gray (**4.12**).

Occasionally, the Impressionists would shoot into a curved mirror to distort the image. Such distortions could create a POV shot, as in Dulac's *The Smiling Madame Beudet*; this film contains many optical devices that convey the heroine's unhappiness with her boorish husband (**4.13**). L'Herbier uses a similar mirror shot in *El Dorado* (**4.14**), but here the framing is not from anyone's point of view; it simply conveys the man's drunkenness subjectively.

Throwing the lens out of focus could also convey subjectivity, whether we see the characters or see through their eyes. In *Le Brasier ardent*, the heroine and her husband have just agreed to divorce, and she sadly stands thinking (**4.15**, **4.16**). After the hero of Renoir's *La Fille de l'eau* has been in a fight, he sits groggily as a POV shot conveys his mental state (**4.17**, **4.18**). Similarly, the framing of a shot may suggest characters' points of view or inner states (**4.19**, **4.20**).


The Smiling Madame Beudet

El Dorado

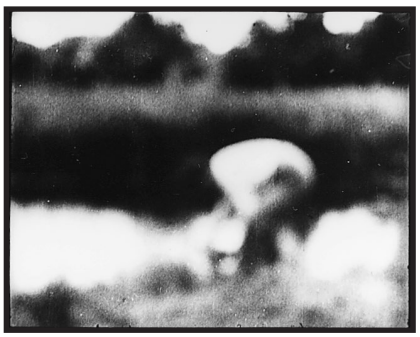
4.13, *left* In *The Smiling Madame Beudet*, the wife's dislike of her husband is rendered in a grotesque POV shot.

4.14, *right* A shot made using a curved mirror, from L'Herbier's *El Dorado.*

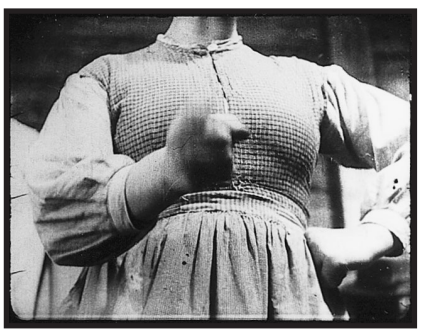
Le Brasier ardent

4.15, 4.16 In *Le Brasier ardent*, the image goes out of focus to suggest the heroine's mental abstraction.

La Fille de l'eau



4.17, 4.18 A POV shot in *La Fille de l'eau* shows the hero's vision blurred as a result of a beating.


Visages d'enfants

Feu Mathias Pascal

4.19, *left* In Jacques Feyder's *Visages d'enfants*, a low camera height and slightly low angle show the optical point of view of a child being scolded.

4.20, *right* A drunken woman's dizziness is conveyed in *Feu Mathias Pascal* through a canted framing as she staggers along a hallway.

Virtually any manipulation of the camera could be used subjectively. Slow motion was common in rendering mental images (**4.21**). In *Napoléon*, Gance divided the frame into a grid of smaller, distinct images (**4.22**). He also used three cameras side by side to create an extremely wide format called a *triptych* (**4.23**). This functioned to create wide vistas, symbolic juxtapositions of images, and occasional subjective effects.

Impressionist films also feature camera movements that convey subjectivity and enhance photogénie. Moving shots could suggest the character's optical point of view (**4.24**). The moving camera could also convey subjectivity without optical point of view, as in the carnival scene in Epstein's *Coeur fidèle.* Here the heroine sits miserably on a carnival ride with the fiancé her parents have forced on her (**4.25**; **Video 4.1**).

Feu Mathias Pascal

4.21 In *Feu Mathias Pascal*, a slow-motion image shows Mathias leaping on his enemy.

Napoléon

4.22 In a split-screen process he called Polyvision, Gance conveyed the chaos of a pillow fight in *Napoléon.*

Napoléon

4.23 In *Napoléon*, three images joined horizontally create an epic vista of the hero surveying his troops.

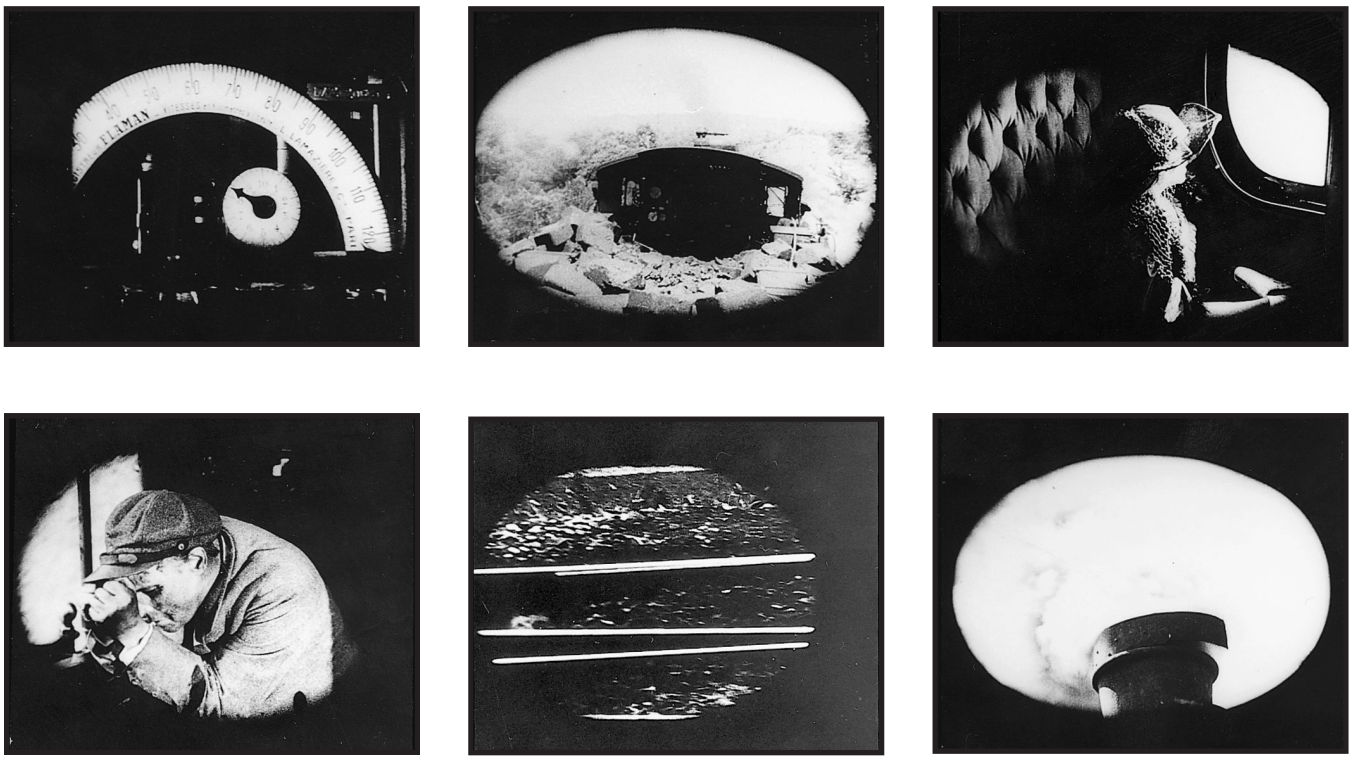
Napoléon

Coeur fidèle

4.24, *left* In *Napoléon*, Gance mounted the camera on a horse's back, putting us in the hero's position as he flees from pursuing soldiers.

4.25, *right* In *Coeur fidèle*, the camera is mounted on the swing along with the couple so that the background whirls past as the woman and her fiancé sit unmoving in the foreground.

Devices of Editing Until 1923, camera devices for achieving photogénie and expressing subjectivity were the main distinguishing traits of Impressionism. In that year, however, two films appeared that experimented with quick editing to explore characters' mental states. Gance's *La Roue* (which premiered in December of 1922 but was released in February of 1923) contains several scenes with very fast cutting. In one sequence, many short shots convey the overwrought emotions of the hero, Sisif. A railway engineer, he has fallen in love with Norma, a woman whom he has raised from a child and who thinks she is his daughter. He is driving the train on which she is riding into the city to be married. In despair, he opens the throttle of the train, planning to crash it and kill himself and everyone aboard (**4.26–4.31**). Figures 4.26 through 4.31 are, respectively,



La Roue

4.26–4.31 In *La Roue*, a long series of shots, gradually decreasing in length, suggests the train's dangerous acceleration, Norma's growing anxiety, and Sisif's anguish.

eleven, fourteen, fourteen, seven, six, and five frames long. Given that projection speeds were about twenty frames per second at this time, each shot would last less than a second, and the shortest would remain on the screen for only about a quarter of a second. Here excitement is conveyed less through acting than through a rhythmic rush of swift details (**Video 4.2**).

Later in *La Roue*, Sisif's son Elie, who also loves Norma, has fallen over a cliff during a fight with Norma's husband. As he dangles, he hears Norma calling and running to his rescue. Suddenly a close-up of his face introduces a radically abbreviated series of shots. Each is only one frame in length, showing Elie and Norma in situations from earlier scenes in the film. This barrage of instantaneous flashbacks is too brief to register on the eye (because twenty of them would pass in a single second). The effect is a flicker, suggesting the confusion of Elie's emotions as he recognizes Norma's voice just before falling to his death. This scene is the first known use of single-frame shots in film history. Such segments of rhythmic montage made *La Roue* an enormously influential film during the 1920s.

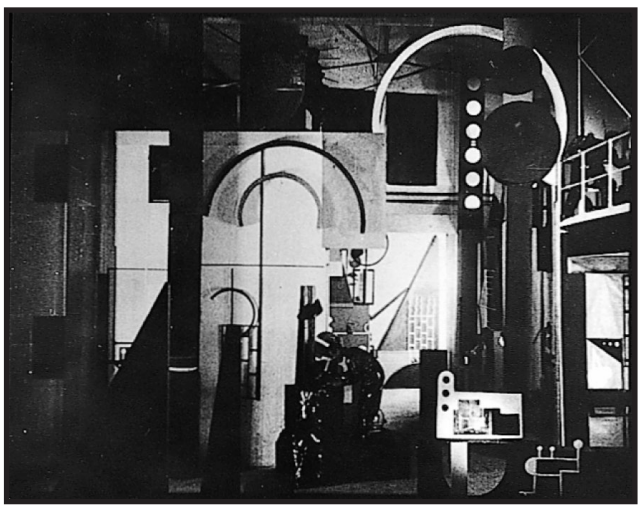
Another film, Epstein's *Coeur fidèle*, which appeared in the autumn of 1923, also drew upon fast editing. We have already seen how the moving camera in the carnival scene helps suggest the heroine's unhappiness. The editing enhances this effect. As in *La Roue*'s train scene, details appear in a series of about sixty brief shots of the objects around the whirling-swings ride. Most of these shots are well under one second, and many are only two frames long. One brief segment, for example, shows the man the woman actually loves looking on from the ground, a quick long shot of the ride and crowd, then quick flashes of two frames each of the heroine and her thuggish fiancé.

After the release of *La Roue* and *Coeur fidèle*, fast rhythmic editing became a staple of Impressionist filmmaking. It appears in the disorienting opening sequence of *Menilmontant*, where the violence of a double murder is conveyed through details caught in close, short shots. Gance pushed the technique he had innovated even further in the final scene of *Napoléon* by using swift editing in a triptych sequence, with rapid changes in three side-by-side frames, combined with multiple superimpositions. Ever since the 1920s, filmmakers around the world have explored the possibilities of rhythmic editing, which the Impressionists opened up.

Devices of Mise-en-Scène Because the Impressionists were interested primarily in the effects of camerawork and

4.32 In Epstein's *L'Affiche*, the tools the heroine uses in making artificial flowers are turned into a striking still life through arrangement and lighting.

4.33, 4.34 In *Kean*, we see a shot/reverse shot of the hero and heroine through a curtain that suggests their points of view.



4.35 For *L'Inhumaine*, L'Herbier had the great French modern artist Fernand Léger design the laboratory of the scientist-hero.

4.36 In *L'Inondation*, Delluc filmed a character walking along a country road with the sun opposite the camera, transforming the landscape into one of the film's many lovely compositions.

editing on the subjects filmed, fewer distinctive traits of the movement lie in the area of mise-en-scène. Still, we can make some generalizations about this aspect of their style. Perhaps most important, the Impressionists were concerned about lighting objects to enhance their photogénie as much as possible (**4.32**).

If filters placed over the lens could enhance a shot's photographic effect, then shooting through some translucent object placed in the setting of the scene could do the same. The Impressionists often shot through textured curtains. In *Kean*, the hero's first meeting with the woman he will love has him holding a gauzy curtain up between them (**4.33**, **4.34**).

Finally, the Impressionists often tried to use striking settings. They did so in two opposing ways: first, by employing modernist décor and, second, by filming in real locations.

In French society in general, "modern" design of the type now labeled Art Deco was fashionable at the time. Some of the filmmakers used celebrated architects and artists as designers (**4.35**; **Video 4.3**). As we saw earlier in this chapter, however, much French filmmaking of the 1920s depended in part on location shooting, and the Impressionists found photogénie in natural landscapes (**4.36**). L'Herbier obtained unprecedented permission to shoot in the Alhambra in Spain for *El Dorado*, and part of *Feu Mathias Pascal* was done on location in Rome.

Impressionist Narratives The Impressionists' stylistic devices were startlingly innovative, yet most of their narratives were conventional. The plots place characters in extremely emotion-laden circumstances. A situation may trigger memories, which lead to flashbacks, or it may inspire visions of the characters' desires, or it may lead the

character to get drunk, motivating distorted views of his or her surroundings. Impressionist characters faint, go blind, or fall into despair, and these states are vividly rendered through camera techniques.

As a result, Impressionist narratives depend to a considerable extent on psychological motivation. As in classical narratives, cause and effect operate, but causes arise largely from characters' conflicting traits and obsessions. In L'Herbier's *Feu Mathias Pascal*, for example, a man living in a small French town marries, and his mother-in-law makes the couple miserable. In despair, he seizes upon an accident that makes it appear that he has died. He takes up a new identity in Rome and falls in love—triggering visions and dreams of a new life. The entire film centers around his motivations and reactions.

In Impressionist films, the devices of camerawork, editing, and mise-en-scène that we have described do not occur continuously throughout the narrative. Instead, the action usually progresses in a conventional fashion, punctuated by scenes in which we linger over characters' reactions and mental states. At the beginning of *El Dorado*, for example, there is a lengthy scene in which the heroine thinks of her sick son, with filters suggesting her lack of attention to the events around her (see 4.10, 4.11). Yet much of the film is a conventionally melodramatic story of how she came to be in this situation and how she strives to escape from it.

Only a few Impressionist films attempted to create innovative narrative patterns that would make character subjectivity the basis for an entire film's form. Dulac achieves this in a relatively simple way with *The Smiling Madame Beudet*; this brief film contains only the simplest of plots, concentrating almost entirely on the heroine's fantasy life and hatred of her husband.

In one of the Impressionist movement's most daring films, *La Glace à trois faces*, Epstein created a shifting, ambiguous plot. Three very different women describe their relations with the same man, and their tales create a contradictory idea of him. In the final scene, after writing to each woman with a different excuse for not meeting her, the hero has a fatal car accident. Nearly all the narrative information has been filtered through the three women's perceptions, and our direct views of the hero reveal little about him. The final, symbolic shot shows him reflected in a triple mirror, suggesting the impossibility of pinning down any truth about him. Few narrative films of the silent era departed so thoroughly from classical storytelling conventions. The innovations of *La Glace à trois faces* would resurface in the European art cinema of the 1950s and 1960s.

THE END OF FRENCH IMPRESSIONISM

In the late 1910s and the first half of the 1920s, the Impressionists formed a tightly knit group, supporting each other in their mission to establish an alternative, artistic cinema. By mid-decade, they had succeeded to a considerable extent. Although few of their films attracted large audiences, they often received favorable reviews and were appreciated by the audiences of the ciné-clubs and art theaters. In 1925, Léon Moussinac, a leftist critic sympathetic to the Impressionists, published *La Naissance du Cinéma* ("The Birth of the Cinema"); there he summed up the movement's stylistic traits and the theoretical views of its filmmakers. Largely based on Delluc's writings, Moussinac's account stressed expressive techniques such as slow motion and superimpositions, and it singled out the Impressionist group as the most interesting French filmmakers.

As more filmmakers copied Impressionist techniques, the style lost its impact. In 1927, Epstein remarked, "Original devices such as rapid montage or the tracking or panning camera are now vulgarized. They are old hat, and it is necessary to eliminate visibly obvious style in order to create a simple film."[4] Indeed, Epstein increasingly presented his stories in a quasi-documentary style, using nonactors and eliminating flashy Impressionist camerawork and editing. His last Impressionist film, *Finis Terrae*, portrays two young lighthouse keepers on a rugged island; subjective camera techniques appear mainly when one youth falls ill. Epstein's early sound film, *Mor-Vran* (1931), eschews Impressionist style altogether in a restrained, poetic narrative of villagers on a desolate island.

Perhaps because the style's techniques were becoming somewhat commonplace, other Impressionist filmmakers began to experiment in different directions. If the era from 1918 to 1922 can be said to have been characterized primarily by pictorialism, and the period from 1923 to 1925 by the addition of rhythmic cutting, then the later years, 1926 to 1929, saw a greater diversity in the movement. By 1926, some Impressionist directors had achieved considerable independence by forming their own small producing companies. Moreover, the support provided by the ciné-clubs and small cinemas now allowed the production of low-budget experimental films. As a result of both these factors, the late Impressionist period saw a proliferation of short films, such as Kirsanoff's *Menilmontant* and the four films produced by Les Films Jean Epstein.

Another factor diversifying the Impressionist movement was the impact of experimental films. As we shall see in Chapter 8, Surrealist, Dadaist, and abstract films often shared the programs of the ciné-clubs and art

cinemas with Impressionist films in the mid-to-late 1920s. These tendencies were lumped in the category of *cinéma pur*. Dulac wrote and lectured extensively in favor of cinéma pur, and in 1928 she abandoned commercial filmmaking to direct a Surrealist film, *The Seashell and the Clergyman.* Thereafter she concentrated on abstract short films.

Problems within the Film Industry

Such stylistic diffusion might eventually have destroyed any unity among the Impressionists' work and ended the movement. In any event, the late 1920s saw a swift decline in these directors' independence. For one thing, their situation as small producers had always been shaky. They did not own their own studios but had to rent facilities for shooting. Each film had to be financed separately, and a filmmaker's credit was typically based on the success of the previous film.

At the end of the 1920s, the French economy experienced the same boom enjoyed by other countries, and the big film companies were gaining strength. Consolidation seemed to promise a new beginning. Pathé, Natan, and Cinéromans merged to create Pathé-Natan, while three other firms created Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert. In this climate, producers had little incentive to support the Impressionists. There had been some hope that the films might be fresh enough to succeed in America and Germany, but they were as uncompetitive abroad as they were at home.

As a result, most Impressionists lost their independent companies. In 1928, Cinéromans absorbed L'Herbier's Cinégraphic, reediting his expensive production, *L'Argent.* L'Herbier quit, but he was forced into more commercial projects in the sound era. That same year, Les Films Jean Epstein went out of business, though Epstein obtained independent backing for his modest non-Impressionist films. The tangled production history and huge budget of *Napoléon* made it impossible for Gance to remain independent; thereafter he was strictly supervised by his backers, and his subsequent films contain, at best, a shadow of his earlier experimentation.

The introduction of sound in 1929 made it virtually impossible for the Impressionists to regain their independence. Sound production was costly, and it became more difficult to scrape together financing for even a short, low-budget, avant-garde feature. In 1968, L'Herbier recalled the situation:

> When sound arrived, the working conditions in the profession became very difficult for a director like me. It was out of the question, for economic reasons, to envision films in the talking era like those which we had made in the silent era, perhaps even at the author's [i.e., the director's] expense. One had to censor oneself considerably and even, in my case, to adopt forms of cinema which I had always held in contempt. All at once, we were constrained, on account of talk, to do canned theater pieces, pure and simple.[5]

Despite the Impressionist films' limited circulation abroad, they influenced other filmmakers. As we shall see in Chapter 5, the freely moving camera used to convey a character's perceptual experience was quickly picked up by German filmmakers, who popularized this technique and usually have gotten credit for inventing it. Perhaps the most famous artist to carry on the Impressionist tradition was the young designer and director Alfred Hitchcock, who absorbed influences from American, French, and German films during the 1920s. His 1927 film *The Ring* could pass for an Impressionist film (see The Blending of Stylistic Traits p. 148), and during his long career, Hitchcock became a master of subjectivity. He used camera angle, special effects, and camera movement to convey what his characters see and think. Character subjectivity has long been a staple element of filmic storytelling, and the Impressionists explored this technique most thoroughly.

REFERENCES

1. Henri Diamant-Berger, "Pour sauver le film français," *Le Film* 153 (16 February 1918): 9.
2. Dimitri Kirsanoff, "Problèmes de la photogénie," *Cinéa-Ciné pour tous* 62 (1 June 1926): 10.
3. Germaine Dulac, "The Expressive Techniques of the Cinema," tr. Stuart Liebman, in Richard Abel, ed., *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 307.
4. Rémy Duval, "M. Jean Epstein," *Comoedia* 5374 (23 September 1927): 3.
5. Jean-André Fieschi, "Autour du Cinématographie: Entretien avec Marcel L'Herbier," *Cahiers du cinéma* 202 (June/July 1968): 41.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On Albatros: "Albatros soars"

On L'Herbier's *L'Inhumaine*: "L'INHUMAINE: modern art, modern cinema"

On Gance's *La roue*: "An old-fashioned, sentimental avant-garde film"

On *La Maison de mystere*: "A legendary film returns from the realm of the lost"

CHAPTER 5

osferatu

GERMANY IN THE 1920s

Kriemhild's Revenge

THE GERMAN SITUATION AFTER WORLD WAR I

Germany lost World War I and suffered severe economic and political problems. Yet it emerged from the war with a strong film industry. From 1918 to the Nazi rise to power in 1933, its cinema ranked second only to Hollywood in technical sophistication and world influence. Within a few years of the armistice, German films were seen widely abroad, and a major stylistic movement, Expressionism, arose and continued until 1926. Victorious France could not rejuvenate its film industry, so how did defeated Germany's become so powerful?

The German industry's expansion during World War I was due largely to the isolation created by the government's 1916 ban on most foreign films. The demand by theaters led the number of producing companies to rise from 25 (1914) to 130 (1918). By the end of the war, however, the formation of the Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft (Ufa) started a trend toward mergers and larger companies.

Even with this growth, if the government had lifted the 1916 import ban at the end of the war, foreign—especially American—films might have poured in again. Unlike the situation in France, however, the German government supported filmmaking throughout this period. The ban on imports continued until December 31, 1920, giving producers nearly five years of minimal competition in their domestic market. The expansion of the war years continued, with about 300 production companies forming by 1921. Moreover, by 1922, anti-German sentiment in enemy countries had largely faded, and German cinema became famous internationally.

Ironically, much of the film industry's success came while the nation suffered. By late 1918, the combat had pushed the country deep into debt,

and there was widespread hardship. Citizen uprisings broke out, demanding the end of the monarchy and the war. On November 9, just two days before the armistice, the German Republic was declared, abolishing the monarchy. For a few months, radical and liberal parties struggled for control, and it seemed as if a revolution similar to the one in Russia would occur. By mid-January 1919, however, the extreme left wing was defeated, and an election led to a coalition government of moderate liberal parties. In general, the political climate drifted gradually toward the right during the 1920s, culminating in the ascension of the Nazi party in 1933.

Internal strife was intensified by the harsh measures the Allies took in their treatment of Germany. The war officially ended with the signing of the infamous Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. Rather than attempting to heal the rift with Germany, Great Britain and France insisted on punishing their enemy. A "war guilt" clause in the treaty blamed Germany as the sole instigator of the conflict. Various territories were ceded to Poland and France (with Germany losing 13 percent of its prewar land). Germany was forbidden to have more than 100,000 soldiers in its army, and they were not to carry weapons. Most crucially, the Allies expected Germany to pay for all wartime damage to civilian property, in the form of money and goods. (Only the United States demurred, signing its own peace treaty with Germany in 1921.) Resentment over these measures eventually helped right-wing parties come to power.

In the short run, these reparations pushed the German financial system into chaos. The reparations arrangement required that Germany send high payments in gold and ship coal, steel, heavy equipment, food, and other basic goods to the Allies. Germany was never able to fulfill the amounts demanded, and domestic shortages soon developed. The result was inflation, beginning at the war's end and becoming hyperinflation by 1923. Food and consumer goods became scarce and outrageously costly. In early 1923, the mark, which had been worth approximately 4 to the dollar before the war, sank to about 50,000 to the dollar. By the end of 1923, the mark fell to around 6 billion to the dollar. People carried baskets of paper money simply to purchase a loaf of bread.

It might seem that such severe economic problems could not benefit anyone. Many people suffered: retirees on pensions, investors with money in fixed-rate accounts, workers whose earnings lost value daily, renters who saw housing costs spiral upward. Big industry, however, benefited from high inflation. For one thing, people had little reason to save because money lost its value sitting in a bank or under a mattress. Wage earners spent their money while it was still worth something, and movies, unlike food or clothing, were readily available. Film attendance was high during the inflationary period, and many new theaters were built.

Moreover, inflation encouraged export and discouraged import, giving German companies an international advantage. As the exchange rate of the mark fell, consumers were less likely to buy foreign goods. Conversely, companies could sell goods cheaply abroad, compared with manufacturers in other countries. Film producers benefited from this competitive boost. Importers could bring in relatively few foreign films, while countries in South America and Eastern Europe could buy German films more cheaply than they could the Hollywood product. Thus, for about two years after the war, the German import ban protected the film market from competition, and even after imports were permitted in 1921, unfavorable exchange rates sustained the domestic cinema.

The favorable export situation fostered by high inflation fit in with the film industry's plans. Even during the war, the growth of the industry led to hopes for export. But what sorts of films would succeed abroad? More successfully than any other country in postwar Europe, Germany found answers to that question.

GENRES AND STYLES OF GERMAN POSTWAR CINEMA

Partly because the German film industry operated in near isolation between 1916 and 1921, there were few radical changes in the types of films being made. The fantasy genre continued to be prominent, typified by films starring Paul Wegener, such as *The Golem* (1920, Wegener and Carl Boese) and *Der verlorene Schatten* ("The Lost Shadow," 1921, Rochus Gliese). Directly after the war, the leftist political climate led to a brief abolition of censorship, and that in turn fostered a vogue for films on prostitution, venereal disease, drugs, and other social problems. The widespread belief that such films were pornographic led to the reinstitution of censorship. The same sorts of comedies and dramas that had dominated production in Germany and most other countries during the mid-teens continued to be made. Three other trends gained prominence: the spectacle genre, the German Expressionist movement, and the Kammerspiel film.

Spectacles

Before the war, the Italians had won worldwide audiences with historical epics such as *Quo Vadis?* and *Cabiria.* After the war, the Germans tried a similar tactic. German

historical spectacles found some success and, incidentally, revealed the first major German director of the postwar era, Ernst Lubitsch.

Spectacular costume films appeared in a number of countries, but only companies able to afford large budgets could use them to compete internationally. Hollywood, with its high budgets and skilled art directors, could make *Intolerance* or *The Last of the Mohicans*, but productions on this scale were rare in Great Britain and France. During Germany's inflationary period, however, the larger companies could finance historical epics. Some firms could afford extensive backlots, and they expanded studio facilities. The costs of labor to construct sets and costumes were reasonable, and crowds of extras could be hired at low wages. The resulting films were impressive enough to compete abroad and earn stable foreign currency. When Ernst Lubitsch made *Madame DuBarry* in 1919, for example, the film reportedly cost the equivalent of about $40,000. Yet when it was released in the United States in 1921, experts there estimated that such a film would cost perhaps $500,000 to make in Hollywood—at that time, a high price tag for a feature film.

Lubitsch, who became the most prominent director of German historical epics, had begun his film career in the early 1910s as a comedian and director. His first big hit came in 1916 with *Schuhpalast Pinkus* ("Shoe Palace Pinkus"), in which he played a brash young Jewish entrepreneur. It was his second film for the Union company, one of the smaller firms that merged to form Ufa, where he directed a series of more prestigious projects. Ossi Oswalda, an accomplished comedienne, starred in several comedies directed by Lubitsch in the late teens, including *Die Austernprinzessin* ("The Oyster Princess," 1919) and *Die Puppe* ("The Doll," 1919). But it was with Polish star Pola Negri that Lubitsch achieved international recognition.

Negri and Lubitsch first worked together in 1918 on *Die Augen der Mumie Ma* ("The Eyes of the Mummy Ma"). This melodramatic fantasy took place in an exotic Egyptian locale and was typical of German productions of the late 1910s. Negri's costar was the rising German actor Emil Jannings, and with these two Lubitsch made *Madame DuBarry*, based loosely on the career of Louis XV's mistress (**5.1**). It was enormously successful, both in Germany and abroad. Lubitsch went on to make similar films, most notably *Anna Boleyn* (1920). In 1923, he was the first major German director hired to work in Hollywood. Lubitsch quickly became one of the most skillful practitioners of the classical Hollywood style of the 1920s.

Historical spectacles remained in vogue as long as severe inflation enabled the Germans to sell them abroad at prices that no other country's film industry could match. But in the mid-1920s, the end of inflation dictated more modest budgets, and the spectacle genre became considerably less important.

Madame Dubarry

5.1 In *Madame DuBarry*, large sets and hundreds of extras recreate revolutionary Paris.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

5.2 The heroine of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* wanders through the Expressionist carnival set. It almost seems that she is made of the same material as the fairground setting.

The German Expressionist Movement

In late February 1920, a film premiered in Berlin that was instantly recognized as something new in cinema: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.* Its novelty captured the public imagination, and it was a considerable success. The film used stylized sets, with strange, distorted buildings painted on canvas backdrops and flats in a theatrical manner (**5.2; Video 5.1**). The actors made little attempt at realistic

A Chronology of German Expressionist Cinema

1920
February: Decla company releases *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*), directed by Robert Wiene; it starts the Expressionist movement.
Spring: Decla and Deutsche Bioscop merge to form Decla-Bioscop; under Erich Pommer's supervision, Decla-Bioscop produced many of the major Expressionist films.
Algol, Hans Werckmeister
Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam (*The Golem*), Paul Wegener and Carl Boese
Genuine, Robert Wiene
Von Morgens bis Mitternacht (*From Morn to Midnight*), Karl Heinz Martin
Torgus, Hans Kobe

1921
November: Ufa absorbs Decla-Bioscop, which remains a separate production unit under Pommer's supervision.
Der müde Tod ("The Weary Death," aka *Destiny*), Fritz Lang
Das Haus zum Mond ("The House on the Moon"), Karl Heinz Martin

1922
Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler (*Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler*), Fritz Lang
Nosferatu, F. W. Murnau

1923
Schatten (*Warning Shadows*), Arthur Robison
Der Schatz ("The Treasure"), G. W. Pabst
Raskolnikow, Robert Wiene
Erdgeist ("Earth Spirit"), Leopold Jessner
Der steinerne Reiter ("The Stone Rider"), Fritz Wendhausen

1924
Autumn: Hyperinflation ends.
Wachsfigurenkabinett (Waxworks), Paul Leni
Die Nibelungen, in two parts: *Siegfried* and *Kriemhilds Rache* ("Kriemhild's Revenge"), Fritz Lang
Orlacs Hände (*The Hands of Orlac*), Robert Wiene

1925
December: Ufa is rescued from bankruptcy by loans from Paramount and MGM.
Tartüff (*Tartuffe*), F. W. Murnau
Zur Chronik von Grieshuus (*The Chronicle of the Grey House*), Arthur von Gerlach

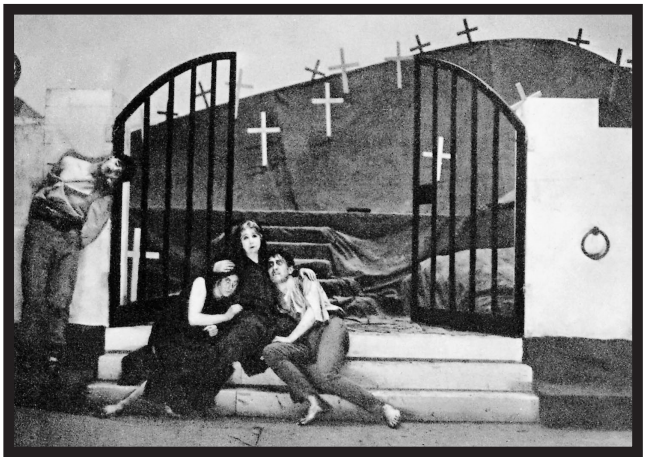
1926
February: Erich Pommer is forced to resign as head of Ufa.
September: *Faust,* F. W. Murnau

1927
January: *Metropolis*, Fritz Lang

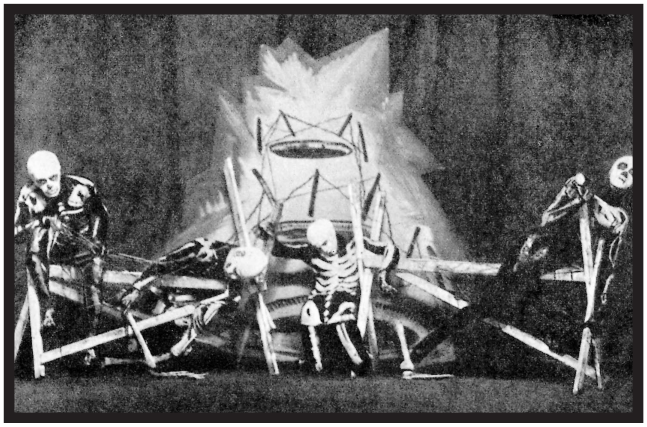
performance; instead, they exhibited jerky or dancelike movements. Critics announced that the Expressionist style, by then well established in most other arts, had made its way into the cinema, and they debated the benefits of this new development for film art.

Expressionism in the Arts Expressionism had begun around 1908 as a style in painting and the theater—appearing in other European countries but finding its most intense manifestations in Germany. German Expressionism was one of several modernist movements around the turn of the century that rejected realism. Its practitioners favored extreme distortion to express an emotional reality rather than surface appearances.

In painting, Expressionism was fostered primarily by two groups. *Die Brücke* ("The Bridge") was formed in 1906; its members included Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Erich Heckel. Later, in 1911, *Der Blaue Reiter* ("The Blue Rider") was founded; among its supporters were Franz Marc and Wassili Kandinsky. Although these and other Expressionist artists such as Oskar Kokoschka and Lyonel Feininger had distinctive individual styles, they shared some traits. Expressionist artists avoided the subtle shadings and colors that gave realistic paintings their sense of volume and depth. Instead, the Expressionists often used large shapes of bright, unrealistic colors with dark, cartoonlike outlines. Figures might be elongated; faces wore grotesque,


Ein Geschlecht

5.3 A dark shape indicates a hill, and actors stare wide-eyed or assume grotesque postures in Fritz von Unruh's play *Ein Geschlecht* ("A Family," 1918).


Die Wandlung

5.4 Actors costumed as skeletons writhe within an abstract landscape of barbed wire in Ernst Toller's *Die Wandlung* ("The Changing," 1919).

masklike expressions and might be livid green. Buildings might sag or lean, with the ground tilted up in defiance of traditional perspective (**Color Plate 5.1**). Such distortions were difficult to create for films shot on location, but *Caligari* showed how studio-built sets could approximate the stylization of Expressionist painting.

A more direct model for stylization in setting and acting was the Expressionist theater. As early as 1908, Oskar Kokoschka's play *Murderer, Hope of Women* was staged in an Expressionist manner. The style caught on during the teens, often in stagings of leftist plays protesting the war and capitalist exploitation. Sets often resembled Expressionist paintings, with large shapes of unshaded color (**5.3**). The performances were comparably distorted. Actors shouted, screamed, gestured broadly, and moved in choreographed patterns (**5.4**). The goal was to express feelings in the most direct, exaggerated fashion possible. Similar goals led to extreme stylization in literature, and narrative techniques such as frame stories and open endings were adopted by scriptwriters for Expressionist films.

By the end of the 1910s, Expressionism had gone from being a radical experiment to being a widely accepted, even fashionable, style. Thus when *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* premiered, it hardly came as a shock to critics and audiences. Other Expressionist films quickly followed. The resulting stylistic trend lasted until the beginning of 1927.

Stylistic Traits of Expressionism What traits characterize Expressionism in the cinema? Historians have defined this movement in widely differing ways. Some claim that the true Expressionist films resemble *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* in using a distorted, graphic style of mise-en-scène derived from theatrical Expressionism. Of such films, perhaps only half a dozen or so were made. Other historians classify a larger number of films as Expressionist because the films all contain some types of stylistic distortion that *function* in the same ways that the graphic stylization in *Caligari* does. By this broader definition (which we use here), there are close to two dozen Expressionist films, released between 1920 and 1927. Like French Impressionism, German Expressionism uses the techniques of the medium—mise-en-scène, editing, and camerawork—in distinctive ways.

A Stress on Composition Whereas the main defining traits of French Impressionism lay in the area of camerawork, German Expressionism is distinctive primarily for its use of mise-en-scène. In 1926, set designer Hermann Warm (who worked on *Caligari* and other Expressionist films) was quoted as believing that "the film image must become graphic art."[1] Indeed, German Expressionist films emphasize the composition of individual shots to an exceptional degree. Any shot in a film creates a visual composition, of course, but most films draw our attention to specific elements rather than to the overall design of the shot. In classical Hollywood films, the human figure is the most expressive element, and the sets, costume, and lighting are usually secondary to the actors. The three-dimensional space in which the action occurs is more important than are the two-dimensional graphic patterns on the screen.

In Expressionist films, however, the expressivity associated with the human figure extends into every aspect of the mise-en-scène. During the 1920s, descriptions of Expressionist films often referred to the sets as "acting" or

as blending with the actors' movements. In 1924, Conrad Veidt, who played Cesare in *Caligari* and acted in several other Expressionist films, explained, "If the decor has been conceived as having the same spiritual state as that which governs the character's mentality, the actor will find in that decor a valuable aid in composing and living his part. He will blend himself into the represented milieu, and both of them will *move* in the same rhythm."[2] Thus, while the setting functioned as almost a living component of the action, the actor's body became a visual element.

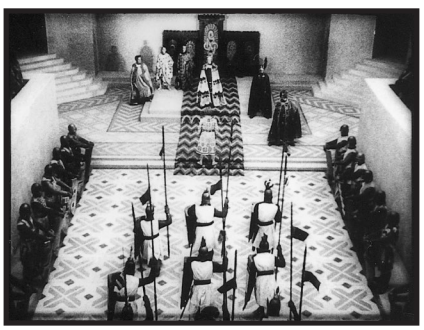
In practice, this blend of set, figure behavior, costumes, and lighting fuses into a perfect composition only at intervals. A narrative film is not like the traditional graphic arts of painting or engraving. The plot must advance, and the composition breaks up as the actors move. In Expressionist films, the action often proceeds in fits and starts, and the narrative pauses or slows briefly for moments when the mise-en-scène elements align into eye-catching compositions. Such compositions need not be wholly static. An actor's dancelike movement may combine with a stylized shape in the set to create a visual pattern.

Expressionist films had many tactics for blending the elements of shots. They used stylized surfaces, symmetry, distortion, and juxtaposition of similar shapes.

Stylized surfaces might make disparate elements within the mise-en-scène seem similar. For example, Jane's costumes in *Caligari* are painted with the same jagged lines as are the sets (see 5.2). In *Siegfried*, many shots are filled with a riot of decorative patterns (**5.5**). In *The Golem*, texture links the Golem to the distorted ghetto sets: both look as if they are made of clay (**5.6**).

Symmetry offers a way to combine actors, costumes, and sets so as to emphasize overall compositions. The Burgundian court in *Siegfried* (see 5.5) uses symmetry, as do scenes in most of Fritz Lang's films of this period. Another striking instance occurs in Hans Werckmeister's *Algol* (**5.7**).

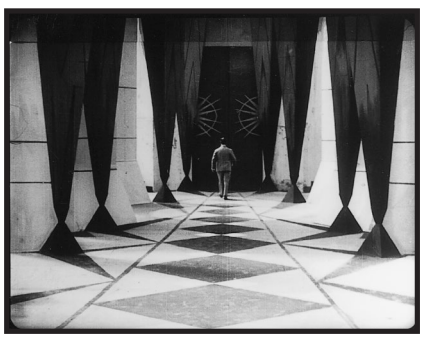
Exaggeration and Repetition Perhaps the most pervasive trait of Expressionism is the use of distortion and exaggeration. In Expressionist films, houses are often pointed and twisted, chairs are tall, and staircases are crooked and uneven (compare **5.8–5.10**).


Siegfried

5.5 In the Burgundian court in *Siegfried*, ranks of soldiers and decor alike form geometric shapes that combine into an overall composition.

The Golem

5.6 In *The Golem*, an animated clay statue emerges onto a rooftop, looking as if he is made of the same material as his surroundings.


Algol

5.7 A symmetrical shot in *Algol* shows a corridor made up of repeated abstract black and white shapes and lines.

Der Schatz

5.8 The old, sagging house in G. W. Pabst's *Der Schatz.*

Raskolnikow

5.9 The leaning buildings and lamppost in Wiene's *Raskolnikow*, an adaptation of *Crime and Punishment.*

Torgus

5.10 A stairway in *Torgus* seems to lean dizzily, with a slender black triangle painted on each step.

To modern viewers, performances in Expressionist films may look simply like extreme versions of silent-film acting. Yet Expressionist acting was deliberately exaggerated to match the style of the settings. In long shots, gestures could be dancelike as the actors moved in patterns dictated by the sets. Conrad Veidt "blend[s] himself into the represented milieu" in *Caligari* when he glides on tiptoe along a wall, his extended hand skimming its surface (**5.11**). Here, a tableau involves movement rather than a static composition.

This principle of exaggeration governed close-ups of the actors as well (**5.12**). In general, Expressionist actors worked against an effect of natural behavior, often moving jerkily, pausing, and then making sudden gestures. Such performances should be judged not by standards of realism but by how the actors' behavior contributed to the overall mise-en-scène.

A crucial trait of Expressionist mise-en-scène is the juxtaposition of similar shapes within a composition. Human figures, for example, are often posed beside distorted trees to create similar shapes (**5.13**). Along with Robert Wiene and Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau was one of the major figures of German Expressionism, yet his films contain relatively few of the obviously artificial, exaggerated sets that we find in other films of this movement. He did create, however, numerous stylized compositions in which the figures blended in with their surroundings (**5.14**).

For the most part, Expressionist films used simple lighting from the front and sides, illuminating the scene flatly and evenly to stress the links between the figures and the decor. In some notable cases, however, shadows were used to create additional distortion (**5.15**).

Editing and Camerawork Although the main traits of Expressionist style come in the area of mise-en-scène, we can make a few generalizations about its typical use of other film techniques. Such techniques usually function

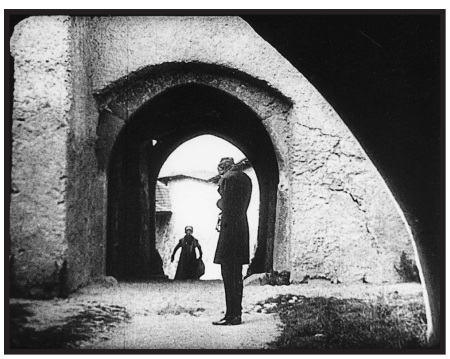
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

5.11 In this famous shot from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, the diagonal composition of the wall dictates the movement of the actor, with his tight black clothes contributing to the compositional effect.

Kriemhild's Revenge

5.12 In *Kriemhild's Revenge*, Marguerithe Schön's wide-eyed stare, her heavy makeup, the abstract shapes in her costume, and the blank background create a stylized composition completely in keeping with the rest of the film.

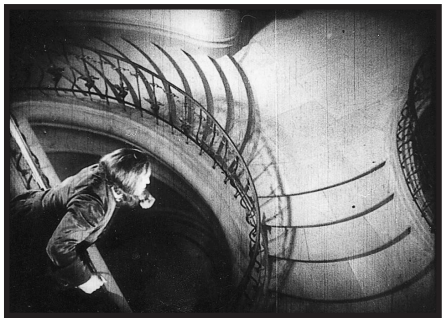
Nosferatu



5.13, *left* A woman's stance in *Der steinerne Reiter* echoes the shape of the stylized tree behind her.

5.14, *right* Count Orlak and his guest are placed within a nested set of four archways, with the hunched back of the vampire and the rounded arms of Hutter echoing the innermost arch. (Arches become an important motif in *Nosferatu*, associated closely with the vampire and his coffin.)

Nosferatu


Tartuffe

5.15 In *Nosferatu*, the vampire creeps up the stairway toward the heroine, but we see only his shadow, huge and grotesque.

5.16 In *Tartuffe*, a high angle places an actor against a swirl of abstract lines created by a stairway.

unobtrusively to display the mise-en-scène to best advantage. Most editing is simple, drawing on continuity devices such as shot/reverse shot and crosscutting. In addition, German films are noted for having a somewhat slower pace than other films of this period. Certainly in the early 1920s they have nothing comparable to the quick rhythmic editing of French Impressionism. This slower pace gives us time to scan the distinctive compositions created by the Expressionist visual style.

Similarly, the camerawork is typically functional rather than spectacular. Many Expressionist sets used false perspective to form an ideal composition when seen from a specific vantage point. Thus, camera movement and high or low angles were relatively rare. In a few cases, a camera angle could create a striking composition by juxtaposing actor and decor in an unusual way (**5.16**).

Expressionist Narrative Like the French Impressionists, Expressionist filmmakers gravitated to certain types of narratives that suited the traits of the style. The movement's first film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, used the story of a madman to motivate the unfamiliar Expressionist distortions for movie audiences. Because *Caligari* has remained the most famous Expressionist film, there is a lingering impression that the style was used mainly for conveying character subjectivity.

In most Expressionist films, the stylization was used for narratives that were set in the past or in exotic locales or that involved elements of fantasy or horror—genres that remained popular in Germany in the 1920s. The two feature-length parts of *Die Nibelungen*, *Siegfried* and *Kriemhild's Revenge*, are based on the national German epic and include a dragon and other magical elements in a medieval setting. *Nosferatu* is a vampire story set in the mid-nineteenth century, and in *The Golem*, the rabbi of the medieval ghetto in Prague animates a superhuman clay statue to defend the Jewish population against persecution. In a reversal of this emphasis upon the past, the last major Expressionist film, *Metropolis*, is set in a futuristic city where the workers labor in huge underground factories and live in apartment blocks, all in Expressionist style.

In keeping with this emphasis on remote ages and fantastic events, many Expressionist films have frame stories or self-contained stories embedded within the larger narrative structure. *Nosferatu* is told by the town historian of Wisborg, where much of the action occurs. Within the narrative, actions are recounted by books and a ship captain's log. The central story of *Warning Shadows* (1923) consists of a shadow play that a showman puts on during a dinner party, with the shadow figures coming to life and acting out the guests' secret passions.

Some Expressionist films do take place in the present. Lang's *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* uses Expressionist style to satirize the decadence of modern German society: the characters patronize drug and gambling dens in nightclubs with Expressionist decor, and one couple lives in a lavish house decorated in the same style. In the cinema, Expressionism had the same potential for social comment that it did on the stage. In most cases, however, filmmakers used the style to create exotic and fantastic settings that were remote from contemporary reality.

Kammerspiel

A third trend of the early 1920s had less international influence than the historical spectacles and the Expressionist works but produced a number of important films. This was the *Kammerspiel*, or "chamber-drama" film. The name derives from a theater, the Kammerspiele, opened in 1906 by the major stage director Max Reinhardt to put on intimate dramas for small audiences. Few Kammerspiel films were made, but nearly all are classics: Lupu Pick's *Shattered* (1921) and *Sylvester* (aka *New Year's Eve* or *St. Sylvester's Eve*, 1923), Leopold Jessner's *Backstairs* (1921) and *Erdgeist* (1923), Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924), and Carl Dreyer's *Michael* (1924). All these films except *Michael* were scripted by the scenarist Carl Mayer, who also coscripted *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

Mayer is considered the main force behind the Kammerspiel genre.

These films contrasted sharply with Expressionist drama. A Kammerspiel film concentrated on a few characters, exploring a crisis in their lives in depth. The emphasis was on slow, evocative acting and telling details, rather than extreme expressions of emotion. The chamber-drama atmosphere came from the use of a small number of settings and a concentration on character psychology rather than spectacle. The Kammerspiel avoided the fantasy and legendary elements so common in Expressionism; these were films set in everyday, contemporary surroundings, and they often covered a short span of time.

Sylvester takes place during a single evening in the life of a café owner. His mother visits his family for a New Year's Eve celebration. Jealousies and conflicts between the mother and the wife intensify until, as midnight strikes, the man commits suicide. Brief scenes of people celebrating in hotels and in the streets create an ironic contrast with the tensions of these three characters, but most of the action occurs in the small apartment (**5.17**). As with other major Kammerspiel films, *Sylvester* uses no intertitles, depending on simple situations, details of acting and setting, and symbolism to convey the plot.

Similarly, *Backstairs* balances two settings. The boardinghouse kitchen in which the housekeeper works and the apartment of her secret admirer, the mailman, stand opposite each other in a grubby courtyard (**5.18**). The film's action never moves outside this area. When the heroine's departed fiancé mysteriously fails to write to her, the mailman tries to console her by forging letters from him.

Shattered, *Backstairs*, and *Sylvester* all end with at least one violent death, and *Michael* closes with the death of its protagonist from illness. Because of the intense psychological situations, unhappy endings, and claustrophobic atmospheres, these films attracted mostly critics and highbrow audiences. Erich Pommer recognized this fact when he produced *The Last Laugh*, insisting that Mayer add a happy ending. This story of a hotel doorman who is demoted from his lofty post to that of lavatory attendant was to have concluded with the hero sitting in the rest room in despair, possibly dying. Mayer, upset at having to change what he saw as the logical outcome of his script's situation, added an implausible final scene in which a sudden inheritance turns the doorman into a millionaire. Whether this upbeat ending was the cause, *The Last Laugh* became the most successful and famous of the Kammerspiel films. By late 1924, however, the trend ceased to be a prominent genre in German filmmaking.

New Year's Eve or Sylvester

5.17 In *Sylvester*, a motif of shots using a mirror on the wall emphasizes the relationships among the characters within the family's drab home.

Backstairs

5.18 Much of the action in *Backstairs* consists of the mailman's trips back and forth across the courtyard as he visits the heroine.

German Films Abroad

The historical spectacle, the Expressionist film, and the Kammerspiel drama helped the German industry break down prejudices abroad and gain a place on world film markets. Lubitsch's *Madame DuBarry* was one of the first postwar German films to succeed abroad. In 1920, it showed in major cities, becoming famous even in countries such as England and France, where exhibitors had pledged not to show German films for a lengthy period after the war. In December 1920, *DuBarry*, retitled *Passion*, broke box-office records in a major New York theater and was released throughout the United States by one of the largest distributors, First National. Suddenly American film companies were clamoring to buy German films, though few found the success of *Passion*.

German Expressionism also proved an export commodity. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* had an international reputation by late 1921, having already had a mildly successful release in America after its triumph in Germany. In September, French critic and filmmaker Louis Delluc arranged for *Caligari* to be shown as part of a program to benefit the Red Cross.

So great was the film's impact that it opened in a regular Parisian cinema in April 1922. Despite the strong anti-German feeling in France, a fashion for German film followed. Works by Lubitsch, as well as virtually all the Expressionist and Kammerspiel films, played in France over the next five years. A similar fad for Expressionism hit Japan in the early 1920s, and in many countries, these distinctive films had at least limited release in art houses.

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE MID-TO-LATE 1920s

Despite these early successes, many factors led to major changes in the industry. Foreign technology and stylistic conventions had considerable influence. The protection afforded the industry by the high postwar inflation ended with currency stabilization in 1924. Success also led prominent filmmakers to be lured to Hollywood. Continued emphasis on export led some studios to imitate Hollywood's product rather than seek alternatives to it. In the middle of the decade, a major trend called *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or "New Objectivity," displaced Expressionism in the arts. By 1929, the German cinema had changed greatly from its postwar situation.

The Technological Updating of the German Studios

Unlike the French, German filmmakers swiftly updated their technology during the 1920s. Because inflation encouraged film companies to invest their capital in facilities and land, many studios were built or expanded. Ufa, for example, enlarged its two main complexes at Tempelhof and Neubabelsberg and soon owned the best-equipped studios in Europe, with an extensive backlot at Neubabelsberg that could accommodate several enormous sets. Here were made such epic productions as Lang's *The Nibelungen* and Murnau's *Faust.* Foreign producers, primarily from England and France, rented Ufa's facilities for shooting large-scale scenes. In 1922, an investment group converted a zeppelin hangar into the world's largest indoor production facility, the Staaken studio. The studio was rented for projects requiring large indoor sets. Scenes from Lang's monumental *Metropolis* were shot at Staaken.

Other innovations during the 1920s responded to producers' desire to give their films impressive production values. Designers pioneered the use of false perspectives and models to make sets look bigger. A marginal Expressionist film, *The Street* (1923), used an elaborate model to represent a cityscape in the background of one scene, with a real car and actors in the foreground. Tiny cars and dolls moving on tracks in the distance in *The Last Laugh* made the street in front of the hotel set seem bigger than it really was (**5.19**). In this area, the Germans were ahead of the Americans, and Hollywood cinematographers and designers picked up tips on models and false perspective by watching German films and visiting the studios.

Producers also wanted to light and photograph their films using techniques innovated by Hollywood during the 1910s. Because the Germans were eager to export films to the United States, a widespread assumption arose that filmmakers should adopt the new elements of American style, such as backlighting and the use of artificial illumination for exterior shots. Articles in the trade press urged companies to build better facilities: Dark studios, endowed with the latest in lighting equipment, replaced the old glass-walled ones.

The installation of American-style lighting equipment began in 1921, when Paramount made a short-lived attempt at producing in Berlin. It outfitted a Berlin studio with the latest technology, painting over the glass roof to permit artificial lighting. There Lubitsch made one of his last German films, *Das Weib des Pharao* ("The Pharaoh's Wife," released in the United States as *The Loves of Pharaoh*, 1921), which was shot with extensive backlighting and effects lighting (**5.20**). By mid-decade, most major German firms had the option of filming entirely with artificial light.

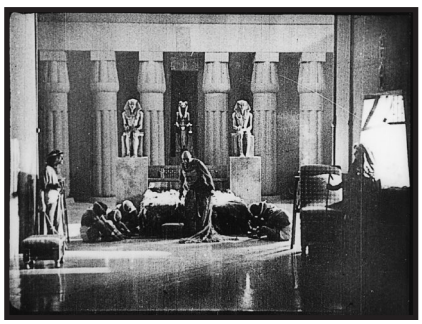
One German technological innovation of the 1920s became internationally influential: the *entfesselte camera* (literally, the "unfastened camera"). During the early 1920s, some German filmmakers began experimenting with elaborate camera movements. In the script for the Kammerspiel film *Sylvester*, Carl Mayer specified that the camera should be mounted on a dolly to take it smoothly through the revelry of a city street (**5.21**).

The film that popularized the moving camera, though, was Murnau's *The Last Laugh*. There the camera descends in an elevator in the opening shot; later it seems to fly through space to follow the blare of a trumpet to the protagonist, who is listening in a window high above. When he gets drunk at a party, the camera spins with him on a turntable (**5.22**, **5.23**; **Video 5.2**). The film was widely seen in the United States and earned Murnau a contract with Fox.

Another film made in the following year, *Variety* (1925, E. A. Dupont), took the idea of the moving camera even further (**5.24**). Tracks fastened to the ceiling allowed

The Last Laugh

5.19 An elaborate use of false perspective in *The Last Laugh*.


The Loves of Pharaoh

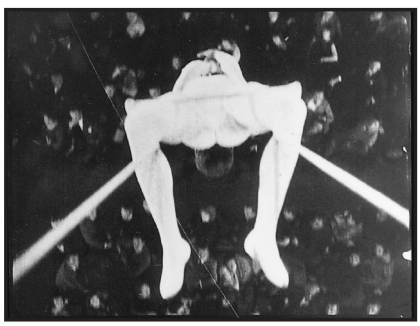
5.20 Hollywood-style backlighting in *The Loves of Pharaoh*.

New Year's Eve or Sylvester

5.21 One portion of a tracking shot through a street in *Sylvester.*

The Last Laugh

5.22, 5.23 In *The Last Laugh*, the background whirls past the protagonist, conveying his dizziness.


Variety

5.24 *Variety* placed the camera on trapezes to convey the subjective impressions of acrobats. Here we look straight down on a man swinging above the crowd.

the camera to swoop above the action, as in Murnau's *Faust* when the hero takes a magic-carpet ride over a mountainous landscape (represented by an elaborate model). Many other German films of the mid-to-late 1920s contain spectacular camera movements.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the French Impressionist filmmakers were already experimenting with the moving subjective camera in the early 1920s. Their films, however, were not widely influential abroad. German filmmakers received worldwide credit for the new technique. Just as *Cabiria* had created a vogue for the tracking camera in the mid-teens, now *The Last Laugh* and *Variety* inspired cinematographers in various countries to move the camera more fluidly. During the late 1920s, a wide range of techniques such as elevators, swings, cranes, and turntables "unfastened" the camera from its tripod.

Once inflationary pressures ended in 1924, the film industry could not keep expanding its facilities. Between 1924 and 1926, big-budget films became less common. Still, the new lighting equipment and expanded studios were in place, ready for use in the more modest productions that dominated the second half of the decade. The end of hyperinflation, however, had other, more serious effects on the film industry.

The End of Inflation

Although the high inflation of the postwar years benefited the film industry in the short run, it was impossible for Germany to continue functioning under such circumstances. By 1923, hyperinflation brought the country to near chaos, and the film industry began to reflect this. At a time when a potato or a postage stamp cost hundreds of millions of marks, budgeting a feature film months in advance became nearly impossible.

In November 1923, the government tried to halt hyperinflation by introducing a new form of currency, the Rentenmark. Its value was equal to one trillion of the worthless paper marks. The new currency was not completely effective, and in 1924, foreign governments, primarily the United States, stepped in with loans to stabilize the economy further. The sudden return to a stable currency caused new problems for businesses.

Many firms that had been built up quickly on credit during the inflationary period either collapsed or had to cut back. The number of movie theaters in Germany declined for the first time, and some of the small production companies formed to cash in on inflationary profits also went under.

Unfortunately for film producers, stable currency often made it cheaper for distributors to buy a film from abroad than to finance one in Germany. Moreover, in 1925 the government's quota regulations changed. From 1921 to 1924, the amount of foreign footage imported had been fixed at 15 percent of the total German footage produced in the previous year. Under the new quota, however, for every domestic film distributed in Germany, the company responsible received a certificate permitting the distribution of an imported film. Thus, up to 50 percent of the films shown could be imported.

As a result of stabilization and the new quota policy, foreign, and particularly American, films made considerable inroads during the crisis years. In 1925, the US share of the German market edged past Germany's own for the first time since 1915, and Hollywood dominated the market in 1926 to a significant extent.

Parufamet Perhaps the most spectacular event of the German film industry's poststabilization crisis came in late 1925, when Ufa nearly went bankrupt. Rather than cutting back production budgets and reducing the company's debt, Ufa head Erich Pommer continued to spend freely on his biggest projects, borrowing to finance them. The two biggest films announced for the 1925–1926 season (German seasons ran from September to May) were Murnau's *Faust* and Lang's *Metropolis.* Both directors, however, far exceeded their original budgets and shooting schedules. Indeed, the films were not released until the 1926–1927 season. The financial fate of late Expressionist films parallels what happened to some of the French Impressionists; two ambitious projects, *Napoléon* and *L'Argent*, curtailed Gance and L'Herbier's power within the film industry.

As a result, in 1925 Ufa was deep in debt, with no prospects of its two blockbuster films appearing anytime soon. A crisis developed when a substantial portion of Ufa's debts were abruptly called in. Then, in late December, Paramount and MGM agreed to loan Ufa $4 million. Among other terms of the deal, Ufa was to reserve one-third of the play dates in its large theater chain for films from the two Hollywood firms.

The arrangement also set up a new German distribution company, Parufamet. Ufa owned half of it, while Paramount and MGM each held one-quarter. Parufamet would distribute at least twenty films a year for each participating firm. Paramount and MGM benefited because a substantial number of their films would get through the German quota and be guaranteed wide distribution. After the deal was made, Pommer was pressured into resigning, and more cautious budgeting policies were initiated at Ufa.

It might seem that the Parufamet deal signaled a growing American control over the German market, yet the arrangement had mostly short-term significance. By 1927, Ufa was again having debt problems. In April, the right-wing publishing magnate Alfred Hugenberg purchased controlling interest in the company, reduced its debts, and restored it to relative health. As we shall see in Chapter 12, Ufa eventually formed the core of the Nazi-controlled film industry.

At the same time, German films' share of the local market swung upward once more, and domestic films again outnumbered the Hollywood product.

THE END OF THE EXPRESSIONIST MOVEMENT

The production of Expressionist films was most intense between 1920 and 1924. During the final years of the trend, only two such films were released, both made by Ufa: Murnau's *Faust* and Lang's *Metropolis*. The latter's release in January 1927 marked the end of the movement. Two major factors in Expressionism's decline were the excessive budgets of the later films and the departure of the main Expressionist filmmakers to Hollywood.

It might have been possible to make inexpensive Expressionist films, especially given that some of the early Expressionist successes had had low budgets. But by 1927, there were few filmmakers left who seemed interested in working in the style.

Robert Wiene, who had initiated the style with *Caligari*, went on to direct three more Expressionist films. The last of these, *The Hands of Orlac*, was made in Austria, where Wiene went on working, making non-Expressionist films. After *Waxworks*, Paul Leni was hired by Universal in 1926; he made a series of successful films there before his death in 1929. Fox hired Murnau on the basis of the critical plaudits for *The Last Laugh*, and he departed for America after finishing *Faust*.

Other personnel closely associated with the Expressionist movement went to Hollywood. Both Conrad Veidt and Emil Jannings, who were among the most prominent Expressionist stars, left Germany in 1926, and each acted in several US films before returning to

Germany in 1929. Set designers were also snapped up. Rochus Gliese, Murnau's set designer, went with the director to Fox to do *Sunrise* and stayed on briefly to work for Cecil B. De Mille. Walter Reimann, who had worked on *Caligari* and other Expressionist films, left Germany to design the sets and costumes for Lubitsch's last silent film, *Eternal Love* (1929).

Perhaps most crucial, after resigning as head of Ufa in early 1926, Pommer went to America. His most important project there was Swedish émigré director Mauritz Stiller's *Hotel Imperial* (1926). By late 1927, after frustrating stints at Paramount and at MGM, Pommer returned to Ufa, no longer as head of the studio but merely as one producer among many. His brief absence coincided with the depletion of Expressionist film personnel and with a move toward more cautious policies in the German film industry.

In 1927, Lang was the only major Expressionist director left in Germany. He left Ufa to start his own production company. His next film, *Spione* ("Spies," 1928) used sets that were closer to the clean lines of Art Deco than to the distortions of Expressionism. Although Lang and other German directors used Expressionist touches in their later films, the movement was over.

Its influence, however, was considerable. Expressionism had proved an effective way of providing atmospheric settings for horror and other genre stories. As these films were seen in America and later as filmmakers fleeing Nazi Germany found their way to Hollywood, echoes of the style appeared in Universal horror films of the late 1920s and 1930s and somewhat later in the stark highlights and shadows of the moody crime thrillers known as *films noirs*. Expressionism has continued to crop up occasionally, as in some of the sets in the American comic horror film *Beetlejuice* (1988, Tim Burton) and in experimental films by David Lynch and Guy Maddin.

NEW OBJECTIVITY

A further reason for the decline of Expressionism lies in the changing cultural climate of Germany. Most art historians date the end of the movement in painting around 1924. The style had been current for about a decade and a half and had gradually filtered into the popular arts and design. It became too familiar to retain its status as an avant-garde style, and artists turned in more vital directions.

Many artists moved away from the contorted emotionalism of Expressionism toward realism and cool-headed social criticism. The trend was called "New Objectivity" (*Neue Sachlichkeit*). The savage political caricatures of George Grosz and Otto Dix are considered central to New Objectivity. Their paintings and drawings are as stylized as those of the Expressionists, but Grosz's and Dix's attention to the realities of contemporary Germany set them apart from that movement. Similarly, photography became an increasingly important art form in Germany, particularly from 1927 to 1933. Such images ranged from Karl Blossfeldt's beautiful, abstract close-ups of plants to John Heartfield's satirical photomontages attacking the Nazis.

The avant-garde theater, too, became less concerned with the extreme emotions of the characters and more with the ironies of the social situation. Bertolt Brecht first came to prominence in the late 1920s and 1930s. His concept of the *Verfremdungseffekt* (commonly translated as the "alienation effect") was the opposite of Expressionist technique. Brecht wanted spectators to avoid total emotional involvement with the characters and action so that they could think through the ideological implications of the subject matter. New Objectivity reached into literature as well, as exemplified by Alfred Döblin's novel, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929), filmed by leftist director Piel Jutzi in 1931.

In the cinema, New Objectivity took various forms. One trend usually linked to New Objectivity was the *street film*. In such films, characters from sheltered middle-class backgrounds are suddenly exposed to the environment of city streets, where they encounter representatives of various social ills, such as prostitutes, gamblers, black marketeers, and con men.

Street films came to prominence in 1923 with the success of Karl Grune's *The Street*. It tells the simple story of a middle-aged man's psychological crisis. From the safety of his apartment, he sees visions of the excitement and romance that may be awaiting him in the street. Slipping away from his wife, he explores the city, only to be lured by a prostitute into a den of cardsharps (**5.25**). Eventually he returns home, but the ending leaves the sense that the denizens of the street lurk nearby.

The most celebrated German director of the mid-1920s, G. W. Pabst, rose to fame when he made the second major street film, *The Joyless Street* (see G. W. Pabst and New Objectivity). Another major example was Bruno Rahn's *Dirnentragödie* ("Whore's Tragedy," aka *Tragedy of the Street*, 1928). In it the enduring Danish star Asta Nielsen plays an aging prostitute who takes in a rebellious middle-class runaway; she dreams of a new life with him. He returns to his parents, and she is arrested for murdering her pimp. The film used dark studio sets, a moving camera,

G. W. PABST AND NEW OBJECTIVITY

G. W. Pabst's first feature was in the Expressionist style: *Der Schatz* ("The Treasure," 1923). His next, *The Joyless Street* (1925), remains the most widely seen of the street films. Set in Vienna during the period of hyperinflation, the film follows the fates of two women: Greta, the middle-class daughter of a civil servant, and Maria, a woman from a poverty-ridden home. When Greta's father loses his money, she is nearly prostituted, while Maria becomes the mistress of a rich man. *The Joyless Street* portrays the era's financial chaos, perhaps most vividly in the scenes of women lining up to buy meat from a callous butcher who extorts sexual favors in exchange for food (**Video 5.3**). Owing to the film's controversial subject matter, it was often censored abroad, and truncated versions still circulate.

Pabst's subsequent career was uneven. He turned out some ordinary films, such as the conventional triangle melodrama *Crisis* (1928). However, his *Secrets of a Soul* (1926) was the first serious attempt to apply the tenets of the new Freudian school of psychoanalysis to a film narrative. This desire for a scientific approach to psychological problems marks *Secrets of a Soul* as another variant of the New Objectivity. It is virtually a case study, following a seemingly ordinary man who develops a knife phobia and seeks treatment from a psychoanalyst. Though the depiction of psychoanalysis is oversimplified, the Expressionist style of some of the dream sequences (**5.27**) adds considerable interest to the film.

Pabst also made another major New Objectivity film, *The Love of Jeanne Ney*, in 1928. The film's famous opening exemplifies what critics admired in his work. Rather than showing the villain immediately, the sequence begins with a tightly framed panning shot that builds a quick sense of his character through details (**5.28**–**5.30**).

Pabst's two late silent films starring the luminous American actress Louise Brooks, *Pandora's Box* (aka *Lulu*, 1929) and *Das Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* (*Diary of a Lost Girl*, 1929), enhanced his reputation and are considered among his finest works. By the late 1920s, he was a favorite with critics and intellectual audiences in Europe and the United States. Pabst also made some of the most notable early German sound films (see Chapter 9).

and close framings to create the oppressive atmosphere of back streets and dingy apartments (**5.26**).

Rahn's death and Pabst's move into other subject matter contributed to the decline of the mainstream street film in the late 1920s. These films have been criticized for their failure to offer solutions to the social ills that they depict. Their gloomy images of the streets suggest that the middle class could find safety only by retreating from social reality.

A number of factors led to the decline of New Objectivity in the cinema. For one thing, the increasing domination of German politics by extreme right-wing forces in the late 1920s and early 1930s resulted in a wider split between conservative and liberal factions. Socialist and Communist groups made films that provided an outlet for strong social criticism (see Chapter 14). Moreover, the coming of sound combined with greater control over the film industry by conservative forces to create an emphasis on light entertainment. The operetta genre became one of the most prominent types of sound filmmaking, and social realism became rare.

The Street

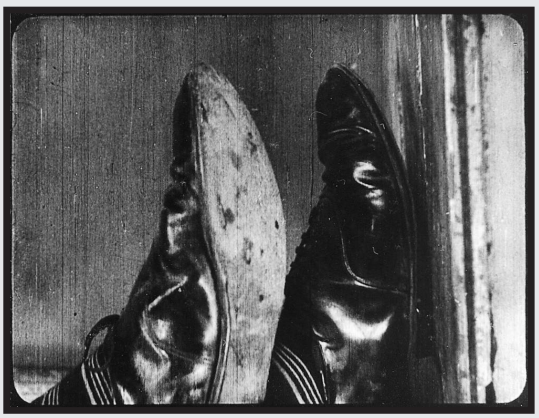
Tragedy of the Street

5.25, *left* The hero follows a prostitute and encounters an ominous sign in *The Street*.

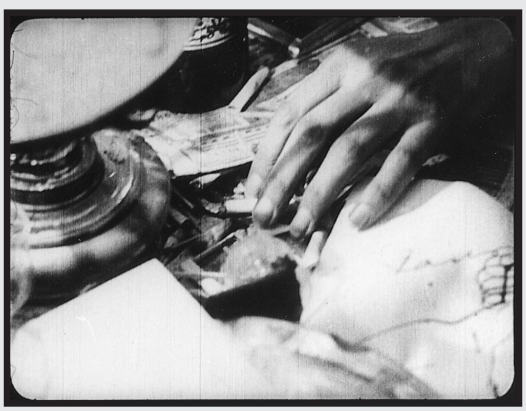
5.26, *right* *Tragedy of the Street* uses lengthy low-height tracking shots through the murky street set as prostitutes solicit clients.

Secrets of a Soul

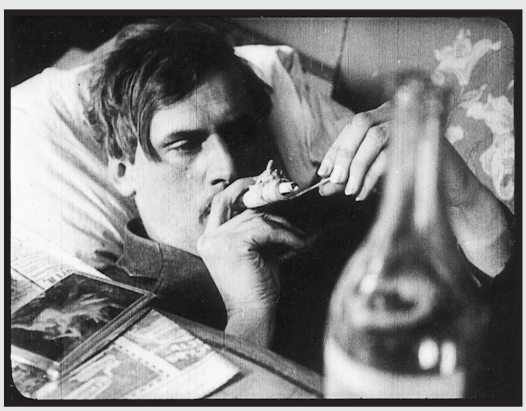
5.27 An Expressionist cityscape in *Secrets of a Soul*.



5.28



5.29



The Loves of Jeanne Ney

5.30

5.28–5.30 The first shot of *The Love of Jeanne Ney*, moving from the villain's worn shoes propped carelessly against the woodwork, to his hand searching the litter on a table for a cigarette butt, and to him lighting up, with a liquor bottle prominent in the foreground.

EXPORT AND CLASSICAL STYLE

Despite the appearance of some distinctive films in the mid-to-late 1920s, the pressure to export led big companies to make films designed for international audiences. Local subject matter was deemphasized, with many films set in France or England, both major markets for German pictures. Moreover, German firms could easily film on location in London or Paris or the resort towns of southern France. In a 1927 Ufa film called *Die geheime Macht* ("The Secret Force"), a group of Russian nobles who flee the Russian Revolution end up running a café in Paris; there the heroine is courted by a rich young Englishman. Even stories set in Germany frequently included foreign characters.

Stylistically, many German films are virtually indistinguishable from the Hollywood product.

Vom Täter fehlt jede Spur

5.31, 5.32 The style of many ordinary German films was virtually indistinguishable from that of Hollywood movies, as in this over-the-shoulder shot/reverse-shot scene in *Vom Täter fehlt jede Spur* ("No Trace of the Culprit," 1928, Constantin J. David).

Filmmakers had been exposed to American films from 1921 on, and many admired what they saw. Moreover, the heavy investment in new equipment and facilities during the inflationary period left a few studios nearly on par technically with the major Hollywood firms. The Germans quickly grasped American lighting techniques and continuity editing. During the late 1920s, filmmakers often employed the 180-degree rule and over-the-shoulder shot/reverse shots (**5.31**, **5.32**). Their skill with the moving camera gave their movies an additional flair.

This attempt to create a standardized quality film that did not seem distinctively German worked well for the industry in the late silent era. Exports rose, and Ufa released a significant number of its films in the American market. The political swing toward the radical right in the early 1930s, however, would eventually cut the German film industry off from the rest of the world once more.

REFERENCES

1. Rudolf Kurtz, *Expressionism and Film*, tr. Brenda Benthien (New Barnet, Herts.: John Libbey, 2016): 68.
2. "Faut-il supprimer les sous-titres?" *Comoedia* 4297 (27 September 1924): 3.

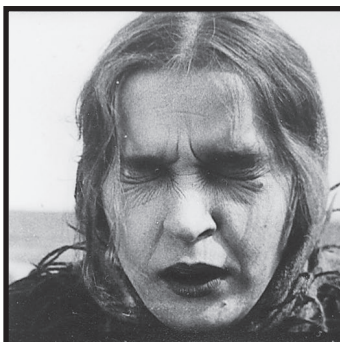
We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On *Der Golem*: "DER GOLEM: Revisiting a classic"

On films of the immediate post–World War I years: "Not-quite-lost shadows" and "Murnau before NOSFERATU"

On 1920s German films: "Two essential German silent classics"

CHAPTER 6



The House on Trubnaya

SOVIET CINEMA IN THE 1920s

Arsenal

In France and Germany, avant-garde film movements began after World War I, but in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the Soviet Montage movement emerged during the 1920s. As in Europe, this avant-garde arose within a commercial film industry.

Although the new government controlled the industry in the USSR after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, it was not immediately able to finance filmmaking. Except for some educational and propaganda projects, films were expected to turn a profit. The Soviet Montage movement, which began in 1925, was initially lucrative partly because several of its films made money abroad—income that helped build up the local film industry.

The postrevolutionary era of the Soviet cinema falls into three periods. During War Communism (1918–1920), the Soviet Union was in a state of civil war and experienced great hardships, with the film industry struggling to survive. The New Economic Policy (1921–1924) was designed to bring the country out of its crisis, and the film industry slowly recovered. Finally, the period from 1925 to 1933 saw renewed government control, resulting in growth and export as production, distribution, and exhibition expanded. This period also saw the experimentation of the Montage movement. Beginning in 1928, however, the First Five-Year Plan imposed strict state controls that were to hasten the movement's end.

THE HARDSHIPS OF WAR COMMUNISM, 1918–1920

Russia underwent two revolutions during 1917. The first, in February, eliminated the Tsar's aristocratic rule. In its place, a reformist provisional government was set up. This compromise did not satisfy the radical Bolshevik party, which favored a Marxist revolution to bring the worker and peasant classes to power. When the provisional government failed to halt Russia's

hopeless and unpopular struggle against Germany in World War I, the Bolshevik cause gained support, especially from the military. In October, Vladimir Lenin led a second revolution that created the USSR.

The February Revolution had relatively little effect on the Russian film industry, which had expanded during the war. Films made just prior to the revolution appeared, and a few films with political subject matter were rushed through production. Evgenii Bauer, a leading director, made *The Revolutionary*, released in April; it supported Russia's continued participation in World War I. Yakov Protazanov's *Father Sergius*, produced between the two revolutions, was released in 1918. This film carried on the tradition of the mid-1910s Russian cinema, with its emphasis on psychological melodrama (see Russia p. 48).

The Bolshevik Revolution in October created a far greater disruption in Russian life in general. Given that the Communists favored state ownership of all companies, existing film firms waited nervously to see what would happen. Coincidentally, Bauer died in the spring of 1917, and the illness of his producer, Alexander Khanzhonkov, ended that company's existence. Another major prerevolutionary producer, Alexander Drankov, left the USSR in the summer of 1918 and tried vainly to reestablish his business abroad. After a brief trial period of producing propaganda films commissioned by the new government, the Yermoliev troupe fled to Paris via the Crimea in 1919; there they established a successful company, Films Albatros (See The Impressionists' Relation to the Industry p. 74).

The logical first step for the new Marxist regime would have been for the government to acquire, or nationalize, the film industry. The Bolsheviks, however, were not yet powerful enough for this step. Instead, a new regulatory body, the People's Commissariat of Education (generally known as Narkompros), was assigned to oversee the cinema. The head of Narkompros was Anatoli Lunacharsky. He was interested in film and occasionally wrote scripts. Lunacharsky's sympathetic attitude later helped create favorable conditions for the Montage directors.

During the first half of 1918, Narkompros struggled to gain control over film production, distribution, and exhibition. A few Soviets, or local workers' governing bodies, set up their own production units, making propaganda films promoting the new society. For example, the Petrograd Cinema Committee produced *Cohabitation* (1918), made by a collective of directors and scripted by Lunacharsky. Under Soviet rule, large houses that had previously belonged to rich families were divided to provide dwellings for poorer families. In *Cohabitation*, a well-to-do professor and a poor janitor work at the same school; when the janitor and his daughter are assigned to live in the professor's large home, the latter's wife objects. Eventually all learn to live together in harmony (**6.1**).

Cohabitation

6.1 *Cohabitation* ends with documentary shots of cheerful revolutionary soldiers, giving this early Soviet film an air of historical immediacy.

The year 1918 also saw the first directorial efforts of two young men who were to become major directors in the 1920s. In June, Dziga Vertov took charge of Narkompros's first newsreel; later he would be an important documentarist working in the Montage movement. Before the October Revolution, Lev Kuleshov made *Engineer Prite's Project* (released in 1918) for the Khanzhonkov firm, where he had previously worked as an actor and set designer. Unlike his contemporaries in Russia, Kuleshov employed Hollywood-style continuity guidelines (**6.2–6.6**). Kuleshov's later teachings and writings explored the implications of Hollywood continuity style in detail.

Despite these tentative signs of progress, however, Soviet production received two serious blows during 1918. Because the companies that had fled after the revolution had taken whatever they could with them, the USSR badly needed production equipment and raw stock. (Neither was manufactured there.) In May, the government entrusted $1 million in credit to a film distributor who had operated in Russia during World War I, Jacques Cibrario. On a buying mission to the United States, Cibrario purchased worthless used material and absconded with most of the money. Russia had little foreign currency, and the loss was serious.

It is little wonder that the government was reluctant to give the film industry further large sums. Another problem arose in June 1918, when a decree required that all raw stock held by private firms be registered with the government. The remaining producers and dealers promptly hid what little raw film remained, and a severe shortage developed.

From 1918 to 1920, Soviet production, distribution, and exhibition were disorganized. Only six films were produced under state auspices in 1918. Sixty-three were made in 1919, but most were short newsreels and *agitki*, brief propaganda films with simple pro-Soviet messages.

Engineer Prite's Project

6.2 A scene in *Engineer Prite's Project* uses continuity editing, as a woman seated at a window drops something to attract the attention of two men passing below.

6.3 A long shot shows them noticing the object.

6.4 In a cut-in, the hero picks it up.

6.5 In another shot, he looks up and right.

6.6 In the reverse shot, the woman looks back at him. The rest of the scene proceeds in standard continuity fashion.

Workers of All Lands, Unite!

6.7 An actor playing Karl Marx sits before a map of Europe, writing the *Communist Manifesto*. The superimposed clasping workers' hands symbolize his inspiration for the famous command (and the film's title).

Workers of All Lands, Unite! (1919), for example, showed scenes from the history of the struggle of workers across the ages, linked by quotes from Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (**6.7**). Conditions remained bleak, however, especially for the few private firms still producing films. When the Russ company set out in 1919 to adapt Tolstoy's *Polikushka*, lack of food, heat, and positive film stock created incredible difficulties. The film reached theaters only in late 1922.

These were the years of the civil war in the USSR, as the Reds, or Bolshevik forces, fought the Whites, Russians opposed to the revolutionary government and supported by Britain, the United States, and other countries. In 1920, the Bolsheviks won, but at a terrible cost.

During the civil war, a major concern was to get films out to troops and villagers in the countryside. Many of the far-flung areas had no movie theaters, and the Soviet government innovated the use of *agit-vehicles*. Trains, trucks, and steamboats (**6.8**) visited the countryside. Painted with slogans and caricatures, they carried propaganda leaflets, printing presses, and small filmmaking setups. They put on theatrical skits or showed movies on an outdoor screen for local crowds.

Production, however, continued at a low level. In August 1919, Lenin finally nationalized the film industry. The main effect of this move was the discovery of many old films—both Russian and foreign—that had been stored away. These films provided most of what Soviet citizens saw in theaters until 1922.

The Kuleshov Group

The departure of the Yermoliev and Drankov companies, along with the dissolution of Khanzhonkov, meant that a generation of Russian filmmakers had largely disappeared. Who would replace them? Despite the hardships of War Communism, Narkompros established the State Film School in 1919. In 1920, the young director of *Engineer Prite's Project*, Lev Kuleshov, joined the faculty and formed a small workshop that was to train some of the era's important directors and actors.

Conquerors of the Sun

6.8 A decorated agit-train called the "V. I. Lenin." The sign at the top reads "Soviet Cinematograph," indicating that the train carried a projection setup. The words at the sides of the door say "people's theater."

Over the next few years, working under conditions of great deprivation and often without film stock for their experiments, Kuleshov's group explored the new art. They practiced acting and put on plays and skits staged as much like films as possible. Some of the skits used small frames with curtains, within which the actors stood to create "close-ups." Later they experimented with film scenes, reediting old films. In 1921, Kuleshov obtained a small amount of precious raw stock from the government and shot what are known as the "Kuleshov experiments." In all of these, the group explored an editing principle now called the *Kuleshov effect*.

The Kuleshov effect is based on leaving out a scene's establishing shot and leading the spectator to infer spatial or temporal continuity from the shots of separate elements. Often Kuleshov's experiments relied on the eyeline match. The workshop's most famous experiment involved recutting old footage with the actor Ivan Mozhukhin. A close view of Mozhukhin with a neutral expression was selected. This same shot was repeatedly edited together with shots of other subject matter, variously reported as a bowl of soup, a dead body, a baby, and the like. Supposedly, ordinary viewers praised Mozhukhin's performance, believing that his face had registered the appropriate hunger, sorrow, or delight—even though his face was the same in each scene.

This Mozhukhin experiment does not survive, but two other Kuleshov experiments do. One stages a fight on a balcony, watched by a man on a sidewalk nearby. Its skillful editing, notably its use of eyeline matching, reflects the knowledge of continuity style that Kuleshov had demonstrated in *Engineer Prite's Project* (see 6.2–6.6). A second, poetically called *The Created Surface of the Earth*, assembled a single space out of shots made in various widely separated locations, all united by the eyeline matches between a man and a woman who meet in a park. Unfortunately the

The Created Surface of the Earth

6.9 Actors in a Moscow park look and point offscreen. The next shot (missing) showed the US Capitol, which they seem to see.

ending is missing, but it showed the pair looking and pointing offscreen (**6.9**), followed by a shot of the US Capitol (from an old film), and finally shots of the pair walking along a Moscow street and ascending a flight of steps—which the editing suggests are those of the Capitol but which were actually filmed at a cathedral in Moscow. In all of the Kuleshov experiments, the filmmakers built up an overall space that had not existed during filming.

The major implication of Kuleshov's experiments was that in cinema the viewer's response depended less on the individual shot than on the editing—the montage or "mounting" of the shots. This idea was to be central to the Montage filmmakers' theory and style. The Kuleshov group's move from classroom experimentation to film production, however, would take three years.

RECOVERY UNDER THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY, 1921–1924

By 1920, the hardships caused by the civil war and the disorganization of the new government had created a severe famine in parts of the USSR. Faced with this crisis, Lenin formulated the New Economic Policy (NEP) in

1921, which allowed a limited and temporary reintroduction of private ownership and capitalist-style dealings. As a result, hoarded raw stock reappeared, and film production by private firms and government groups increased.

In early 1922, Lenin made two statements that helped determine the course of Soviet filmmaking. First, he issued the so-called Lenin proportion, stating that film programs should balance entertainment and education—though not specifying how much of each type of film should be shown. He also declared (according to Lunacharsky), "Of all the arts, for us the cinema is the most important." Lenin probably meant that the cinema was the most powerful tool for mass communication in a largely illiterate population. His statement has been quoted innumerable times as an indication of the Bolshevik government's reliance on the new medium for propaganda.

Centralized Distribution

In late 1922, the government attempted to organize the feeble film industry by creating a central distribution monopoly called Goskino. All private and government production firms were to release their films through Goskino, which would also control the import and export of films. The attempt failed because several companies were powerful enough to compete with Goskino. In some cases, private importers bid against Goskino for the same films, driving prices higher.

This was no small matter. During the NEP, the Soviet film industry relied on imports. In the early years after the October Revolution, the USSR had been cut off from the rest of the world, partly by the civil war and partly by most countries' refusal to deal with a Communist government. In 1922, the Treaty of Rapallo opened the way for trade between Russia and Germany. The treaty was a breakthrough in the USSR's relations with the West, and Berlin became the main conduit for films going into and out of the USSR during the 1920s.

Eager to beat their competitors into the vast new Soviet market, German film firms sold on credit. Lighting equipment, raw stock, and new films flowed into the USSR. A 1923 investigation found that 99 percent of films in Soviet distribution were foreign. Because most of the film industry's revenues came from distributing imported pictures, foreign trade played a crucial role in its recovery.

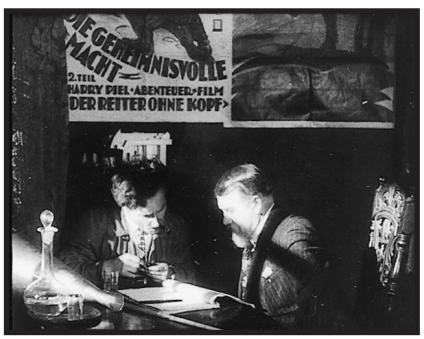
Although the industry faced an uphill struggle, the NEP period saw a slow growth. Production centers were gradually set up in the non-Russian republics of the USSR so that ethnic populations could see films reflecting their own cultures. With the acquisition of raw stock, production of fiction features increased. In 1923, there appeared the first Soviet film that was as popular with Soviet audiences as were imported films: a civil war drama called *Red Imps*. It was directed by Ivan Perestiani for the Georgian branch of Narkompros. The film concerns two teenagers, a brother obsessed with James Fenimore Cooper's adventure books and a sister devoted to a novel about anarchism. When their father is killed by the Whites, the pair team up with a black street acrobat and set out to join the Red Army. As scouts, they live out the sorts of adventures they had previously read about (**6.10**).

Regularized Production

The year 1924 saw a further increase in production. Yuri Zhelyabuzhsky, who had gotten his start directing *agitki*, made *Cigarette Girl of Mosselprom*, a contemporary comedy in which a street cigarette seller becomes a movie star by accident. Several scenes reflect the Soviet film situation of the day (**6.11**, **6.12**). Another popular film, *Palace*

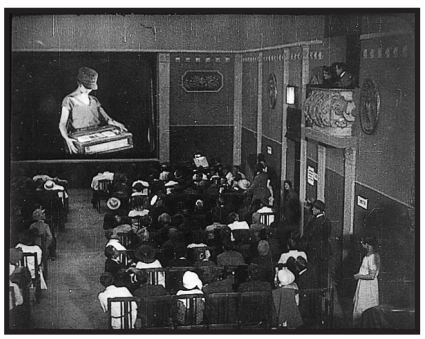
Red Imps

6.10 In scenes like this, when the children leap from a bridge onto a train during the defense of their town, *Red Imps* captured the fast pace of American adventure films of the 1910s.



Cigarette-Girl of Mosselprom

6.11 In a sequence from *Cigarette Girl of Mosselprom*, set in a movie studio, a director reading a script sits in front of a German film poster.



Cigarette Girl of Mosselprom

6.12 At the end, the heroine's film premieres in what may have been a typical movie theater of the day.

and Fortress, was made by the veteran prerevolutionary director, Alexander Ivanovsky. It centered on a revolutionary of the era of Tsar Alexander II who is imprisoned and eventually goes mad (**6.13**). *Palace and Fortress* became a favorite target of the Montage directors over the next few years as they advocated a new approach to filmmaking.

Members of the Kuleshov workshop of the State Film School also made their first feature in 1924. *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* is a hilarious comedy about Western misconceptions of the USSR. Mr. West, a naive American representative of the YMCA, reluctantly travels to Moscow, where thieves exploit his prejudices, pretending to defend him against "barbarous" Bolshevik thugs. Eventually he is rescued by real (and kindly) Bolsheviks. At the end, the film exploits the Kuleshov effect by combining newsreel and staged footage (**6.14**, **6.15**). With its playful use of acting and editing, *Mr. West* can be counted as a marginal Montage film. It brought the Soviet cinema to the verge of a truly avant-garde movement, as a new generation of directors interested in more radical stylistic exploration began working.

Palace and Fortress

6.13 As this shot of the hero and his mother indicates, *Palace and Fortress* used an old-fashioned style, with the camera facing the back wall straight on, the characters framed from a distance, and flat lighting coming from the front.

INCREASED STATE CONTROL AND THE MONTAGE MOVEMENT, 1925–1930

Growth and Export in the Film Industry

Because the centralized distribution firm Goskino had proved unable to organize the film industry, the government created a new company, Sovkino, on January 1, 1925. The few production firms that were allowed to keep operating were given a strong incentive to help Sovkino survive: They had to invest in stock in the new firm. Goskino continued small-scale production. Its main contribution was *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925), the most famous film of the Montage movement and the first Soviet film to have a major success abroad.

A more extensive and long-lived company was Mezhrabpom-Russ (based on the old Russ collective that had made *Polikushka*). This private firm was owned and financed by a German Communist group, and it made a surprisingly large proportion of the most significant Soviet films—including Vsevolod Pudovkin's silent ones—before its dissolution in 1936.

Specialist companies also held stock in Sovkino: Gosvoyenfilm made military propaganda until the late 1920s, and Kultkino produced educational films—including some by the major Montage-style documentarist Dziga Vertov. Sevzapkino was based in Leningrad, and it later became simply the Leningrad studio of Sovkino. Working at Sevzapkino were a number of young and talented Montage directors, most notably the team of Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg.

Since 1917, the number of theaters had shrunk, due to the lack of films, the breakdown of projectors, the inability to heat the auditoriums, and other problems. Lenin died in 1924, but his belief that the cinema should serve an educational role continued to influence policy. The government insisted on getting films to workers and peasants in remote regions. Sovkino faced the formidable tasks of opening urban theaters and of sending more than 1,000

The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks

6.14, 6.15 In one shot from *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks*, a Soviet official gives a speech, and in the next Mr. West seems to be watching through binoculars—though the shots were clearly made in different spaces and times.

portable projection outfits to the countryside. Moreover, most workers and peasants could afford only tiny entrance fees, so the portable theaters operated at a loss.

How was Sovkino to pay for these portable projection outfits? Not through government subsidies but through its profits mostly from foreign films, which Sovkino imported and distributed in the USSR. During the second half of the decade, however, the company was pressured to reduce the number of imported films. Even reedited, as most of them were, they were considered ideologically harmful. A more desirable source of income was profitable domestic production. Moreover, if Soviet films were sold abroad, they might earn much more. Sovkino thus had a strong incentive to export films. Partly by supporting the young Montage directors, Sovkino produced films that found an audience in the West, and the income that these exports generated bought new equipment and supported the expansion of the industry.

The first triumph abroad was Sergei Eisenstein's *Potemkin*, which proved enormously popular in Germany in 1926 and went on to show in many other countries. Other Soviet films, such as Pudovkin's *Mother*, soon followed and were exported very successfully. The foreign currency earned, especially by Montage-style films, facilitated the Soviet industry's purchase of foreign production and exhibition equipment.

Another goal for Sovkino was to make films that embodied the new ideals of the Communist government so that they could be conveyed to the country's population. The early Montage films, with their dynamic depictions of Tsarist-period oppression and historical rebellions, were praised for their subject matter. Because these films were successful financially and critically, for a few years a new generation of filmmakers was able to continue experimenting in the avant-garde Montage style.

The Influence of Constructivism

The years after the revolution saw enthusiastic experimentation by artists in every medium. They tried to approach artistic creation in a way appropriate to a completely new kind of society. One result was a trend in the visual arts called Constructivism, to which the Montage movement in the cinema was closely linked.

Despite its radical aims, Constructivism had precedents in prerevolutionary tendencies. Influences from French Cubism and Italian Futurism combined in Russia in a movement called Cubo-Futurism, which led to a flamboyant attack on all traditional art forms. Artists affiliated with another movement, Suprematism, took a more spiritual, abstract turn. Simple geometric shapes were combined into compositions. Kasimir Malevich's "Black Square" (1913) was a black square against a white background; in 1917 he created "White on White," a white background surrounding an off-center square of a slightly different shade.

In this prerevolutionary period, few of the Cubo-Futurist or Suprematist artists had political alliances. They criticized traditional artistic styles, but they did not see the artist as having a political role. After the Bolshevik Revolution, however, most artists supported the new government, and there were many debates as to how art and politics could be fused. Some avant-garde artists were given teaching posts or put in positions where they influenced official cultural policy, and Lunacharsky, while not entirely sympathetic to the modernist styles of the day, allowed them a relatively free hand.

The search for a socially useful art resulted in the rise of Constructivism around 1920. Manifestos and articles declared that artists who had been exploring abstract styles need not abandon their ways of working—they simply needed to apply them to useful ends. For the Constructivist, art inevitably fulfilled a social function. It was not an object of rapt contemplation or a source of some enduring higher truth, as many nineteenth-century views of art had held. The artist was not an inspired visionary; he or she was a skilled artisan using the materials of the medium to create an artwork. Artists were often compared to engineers, using tools and a rational, even scientific approach.

The Constructivists often compared the artwork to a machine. While earlier views of art frequently saw the artwork as analogous to a plant, with an organic unity and growth, the Constructivists stressed that it was put together from parts. This process of assemblage was sometimes referred to as *montage*, from the French word for the assembly of parts into a machine. (As we have seen, filmmakers applied the term *montage* to the editing of shots into a film.) This analogy between artwork and machine was seen positively. Because Soviet society focused on enhancing the USSR's industrial output, and also because Communism stressed the dignity of human labor, the factory and the machine became symbols of the new society. Artists' studios were often seen as factories where laborers built useful products.

Because all human response was seen as based on scientifically determinable processes, the Constructivists considered that an artwork could be calculated to elicit a particular reaction. Thus artworks could be used for propagandistic and educational purposes promoting the new Communist society—if only the right ways of making them could be discovered. Many artists therefore jettisoned the

notion that elite art forms (such as opera and painting) were superior to popular art forms (such as circus and poster design). Art should be understandable to all, particularly to the workers and peasants so central to the Bolshevik cause.

Constructivism resulted in an extraordinary fusion of abstract graphic design and practical function. For example, El Lissitzky used a geometric composition straight out of Suprematism for a 1920 propaganda poster supporting the Bolshevik side in the civil war (**Color Plate 6.1**). Constructivist artists designed textiles, book covers, workers' uniforms, street kiosks, even ceramic cups and saucers—many using modernist abstract shapes.

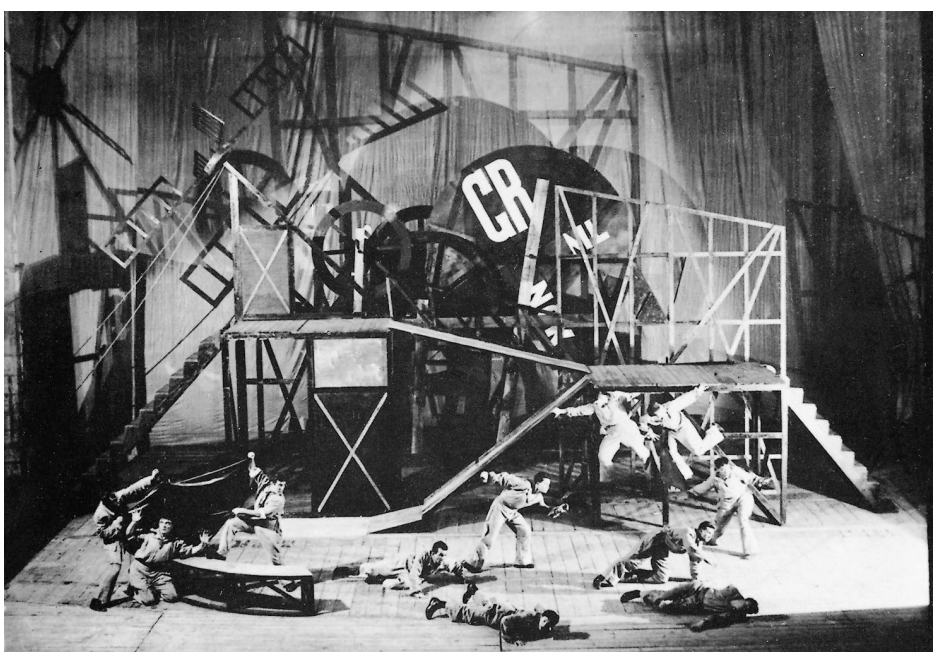
Constructivism affected the theater as well. The most important Constructivist theatrical director was Vsevolod Meyerhold, an established figure who offered his services to the Bolshevik government immediately after the revolution. Meyerhold's bold methods of staging were to influence Soviet film directors. Set and costume designs in several major Meyerhold productions incorporated Constructivist design principles. In his 1922 production of *The Magnanimous Cuckold*, for example, the set somewhat resembled a large factory machine; it consisted of a series of bare platforms and a large propeller turning during the play. The actors performed in ordinary work clothes (**6.16**). In keeping with Constructivism, Meyerhold also pioneered the principle of *biomechanical acting.* The actor's body was assumed to be like a machine, and thus a performance consisted of exaggerated but precise movements rather than the restrained expression of emotions. Meyerhold's actors trained by doing exercises to gain mastery over their bodies, and their performances had an acrobatic quality.

A New Generation: The Montage Filmmakers

During the first half of the 1920s, when all these sweeping changes were revolutionizing the arts, a new generation of filmmakers was moving into the cinema. For them, the revolution was a crucial formative event—partly because they were extraordinarily young. Indeed, Sergei Eisenstein was nicknamed "the old man" by his younger friends because he was all of twenty-six when he began his first feature film.

Born in 1898, Eisenstein came from a middle-class family in Riga, Latvia. His education gave him fluency in Russian, English, German, and French. He recalled that, while on a visit to Paris at age 8, he saw a Méliès film and became fascinated by the cinema. Two years later he visited the circus and became similarly obsessed with this popular spectacle. Following his father's wishes, he began studying engineering in 1915. Eisenstein participated in the revolution and during the civil war worked building bridges. He was drawn to the arts, however, and during this same period he also decorated agit-trains and helped design many theatrical skits for the Red Army. The combination of engineering and artistic work seemed anything but contradictory in the era of Constructivism, and throughout his life Eisenstein likened the production of his films to the building of those bridges.

In 1920, at the end of the civil war, Eisenstein went to Moscow and joined the Proletkult Theater (short for



The Magnanimous Cuckold

6.16 Biomechanical acting, work clothes, and a machine-like set in *The Magnanimous Cuckold*.

Proletarian, or Workers', Cultural Theater). There he designed and codirected many plays. In 1921, Eisenstein (along with his friend, Sergei Yutkevich, another future Montage film director) enrolled in a theater workshop under the supervision of Meyerhold, whom he would always consider his mentor.

In 1923, Eisenstein directed his first theatrical production, *Enough Simplicity in Every Wise Man*. Although the play was a nineteenth-century farce, Eisenstein staged it as a circus. The actors dressed in clown costumes and performed in the acrobatic biomechanical style, walking on a tightrope above the audience or doing handstands as they spoke their lines. Eisenstein produced *Glumov's Diary*, a short film to be shown on a screen on the stage. At the same time that this play was performed, Eisenstein gained some early experience as a film editor: along with Esfir Shub (soon to become an important maker of compilation documentaries), he reedited a German Expressionist film, Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler*, for Soviet release.

Eisenstein always maintained that his move from the theater to film came in 1924, when he directed a production of playwright S. M. Tretyakov's *Gas Masks*, not in a theater but in a real gas factory. According to Eisenstein, the contrast between the reality of the setting and the artifice of the drama was too great. A few months later, he began to work on *Strike* (released in early 1925)—a film set and shot in a factory. It was the first major film of the Montage movement, and Eisenstein went on to make three more important works in that style: *Potemkin*, *October*, and *Old and New*. *Potemkin*'s success abroad gave Eisenstein and his colleagues considerable leeway for experimentation over the next few years. Many Montage films proved more popular abroad than in the USSR, where they were often accused of being too difficult for workers and peasants to understand.

The oldest Montage director in years and experience was Lev Kuleshov, who had designed and directed films before the revolution and then taught at the State Film School. Kuleshov's own Soviet films were only mildly experimental in style, but his workshop produced two important Montage directors.

Vsevolod Pudovkin had intended to train as a chemist until he saw D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* in 1919. Convinced of the cinema's importance, he soon joined Kuleshov's workshop and trained as both an actor and a director. His first feature film typified the Constructivist interest in the physical bases of psychological response; he made *Mechanics of the Brain*, a documentary about Ivan Pavlov's famous experiments on stimulus-response physiology. In 1926, Pudovkin (born 1893) helped found the Montage movement with his first fiction feature, *Mother*. Within the USSR, *Mother* was the most popular of all Montage films. As a result, Pudovkin enjoyed the highest approval from the government of any of the movement's directors, and he was able to keep experimenting with Montage longer than any of the others—up until 1933. Another Kuleshov workshop member, Boris Barnet (born 1902) had studied painting and sculpture, and he trained as a boxer after the revolution. He acted in *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* and other mid-1920s films, and he directed *The House on Trubnaya* (1927) along with other Montage-style films.

The other important filmmaker who, along with Kuleshov, had started directing about the time of the revolution was Dziga Vertov (born 1896). During the mid-1910s, he wrote poetry and science fiction, composed what we now call *musique concrète*, and became influenced by the Cubo-Futurists. From 1916 to 1917, however, he studied medicine until becoming the supervisor of Narkompros's newsreel series in 1917. He went on, in 1924, to make feature-length documentaries, some employing the Montage style.

The youngest Montage directors came out of the Leningrad theater milieu. In 1921, while still in their teens, Grigori Kozintsev (born 1905), Leonid Trauberg (born 1902), and Sergei Yutkevich (born 1904) formed the Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS). This theatrical troupe enthusiastically embraced the circus, the popular American cinema, the cabaret, and other entertainments. They issued provocative manifestos in the manner of the Cubo-Futurists' "Slap in the Face of Public Taste" (1912). In 1922, the FEKS group defined how their approach to acting departed from that of the traditional theater: "from emotion to the machine, from anguish to the trick. The technique—circus. The psychology—head over heels."[1] They staged theatrical events that adopted the techniques of popular entertainments, and by 1924, they moved into the cinema with a short parody of American serials, *The Adventures of Oktyabrina* (now lost). Yutkevich went on to make Montage films on his own; Kozintsev and Trauberg codirected several important films of the movement. Because of their taste for bizarre experimentation, the FEKS group were criticized by government officials from the start of their careers.

Eisenstein, Kuleshov, Pudovkin, Vertov, and the FEKS group were the principal early exponents of Soviet Montage. Other directors picked up their influences and developed the style. In particular, filmmakers working in the non-Russian republics enriched the Montage movement. Foremost among these was Alexander Dovzhenko (born 1894), the principal Ukrainian director. Dovzhenko

A Chronology of the Soviet Montage Movement

1917	February: Tsar Nicholas II is overthrown; the provisional government is established. October: The Bolshevik Revolution
1918	Narkompros (the People's Commissariat of Education) takes charge of regulating the film industry.
1919	August: Nationalization of the film industry Foundation of the State Film School
1920	Lev Kuleshov joins the State Film School and forms his workshop.
1921	The New Economic Policy is instituted.
1922	Formation of Goskino, the state film distribution monopoly
1923	Publication of Sergei Eisenstein's essay, "Montage of Attractions"
1924	*Kino-Eye*, Dziga Vertov *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks,* Lev Kuleshov
1925	January: Formation of Sovkino, the new government distribution monopoly and production company *Strike*, Sergei Eisenstein *Potemkin*, Sergei Eisenstein
1926	*Mother*, Vsevolod Pudovkin *The Devil's Wheel*, Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg *The Cloak*, Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg
1927	*Zvenigora*, Alexander Dovzhenko *The House on Trubnaya*, Boris Barnet *The End of St. Petersburg*, Vsevolod Pudovkin *Moscow in October*, Boris Barnet *SVD*, Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg
1928	March: The First Communist Party Conference on Film Questions is held. *October* (aka *Ten Days That Shook the World*), Sergei Eisenstein *The Heir to Genghis Khan* (aka *Storm over Asia*), Vsevolod Pudovkin *Lace*, Sergei Yutkevich
1929	Sergei Eisenstein begins travels that will keep him abroad until 1932. *The New Babylon*, Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg *My Grandmother*, Kote Mikaberidze *China Express* (aka *Blue Express*), Ilya Trauberg *Man with a Movie Camera*, Dziga Vertov *Arsenal*, Alexander Dovzhenko *Old and New* (aka *The General Line*), Sergei Eisenstein
1930	Formation of Soyuzkino, a centralized company to control all production, distribution, and exhibition *Earth*, Alexander Dovzhenko
1931	*Alone*, Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg *Golden Mountains*, Sergei Yutkevich
1932	*A Simple Case*, Vsevolod Pudovkin
1933	*Deserter*, Vsevolod Pudovkin

had been in the Red Army during the civil war and served as a diplomatic administrator in Berlin in the early 1920s. There he studied art, returning to the Ukraine as a painter and cartoonist. In 1926, he suddenly switched to filmmaking and made a comedy and a spy thriller before directing his first Montage film, *Zvenigora*, in 1927. Based on obscure Ukrainian folk legends, *Zvenigora* baffled audiences but demonstrated an original style that emphasizes lyrical imagery above narrative. Dovzhenko went on to make two more important Montage films, *Arsenal* and *Earth*, also set in the Ukraine.

The Theoretical Writings of Montage Filmmakers

The mid-1920s saw a blossoming of Soviet film theory, as critics and filmmakers sought to understand cinema scientifically. Like the French Impressionists, several Montage directors considered theory and filmmaking to be closely linked. They were united in an opposition to traditional films. All saw in montage the basis of revolutionary films that would inspire audiences. But the writings of the Montage directors differed in important ways.

In many respects, Kuleshov was the most conservative theorist of the group. He admired the succinct storytelling of American films, and he discussed montage chiefly as techniques of editing for clarity and emotional effects. This conception of montage influenced Pudovkin, whose two 1926 pamphlets on filmmaking were soon translated into Western languages (in English as *Film Language*, 1929). Through Pudovkin, montage came to refer generally to dynamic, often discontinuous, narrative editing.

Vertov was far more radical. A committed Constructivist, he emphasized the social utility of documentary film. Vertov saw fiction films as "cine-nicotine," a drug that dulled the viewer's awareness of social and political reality. For him, "life caught unawares" would be the basis of a cinema of fact. Montage was less a single technique than the entire production process: choosing a subject, shooting footage, and assembling the film all involved selection and combination of "cine-facts." As for editing, Vertov emphasized that the filmmaker should calculate the differences between shots—light versus dark, slow motion versus fast motion, and so on. These differences, or "intervals," would be the basis of the film's effect on the audience.

Eisenstein developed the most complicated conception of montage. Initially he believed in what he called the "montage of attractions." As in a circus, the filmmaker should assemble a series of exciting moments to stimulate the viewer's emotions. Later he formulated elaborate principles by which individual filmic elements could be combined for maximum emotional and intellectual effects. He insisted that montage was not limited to editing or even to Constructivist art in general. In a bold essay of 1929, he scoffed at Kuleshov and Pudovkin as treating shots like bricks that are joined to build a film. Bricks, he pointed out, do not interact with each other as film shots do. He asserted that shots should not be seen as simply linked but rather as conflicting sharply with one another. Even Eisenstein's writing style, with its short sentences and paragraphs, tried to convey the principle of collision:

> The shot is by no means an *element* of montage.
>
> The shot is a montage *cell*.
>
> Just as cells in their division form a phenomenon of another order, the organism or embryo, so on the other side of the dialectical leap from the shot, there is montage.
>
> By what, then, is montage characterized and, consequently, its cell—the shot?
>
> By collision. By the conflict of two pieces in opposition to each other. By conflict. By collision.[2]

For Eisenstein, this conflict imitated the Marxist concept of the dialectic, in which antithetical elements clash and produce a synthesis that goes beyond both. Montage could compel the spectator to sense the conflict between elements and create a new concept in his or her mind.

In "collision montage," Eisenstein foresaw the possibility of an "intellectual" cinema. It would attempt not to tell a story but to convey abstract ideas, as an essay or political tract might. He dreamed of filming Marx's *Capital*, and certain of his films took first steps toward intellectual filmmaking.

The filmmakers' theories did not always accord with their practice. Kuleshov and Pudovkin in particular proved more daring as filmmakers than their essays might suggest. All the core Montage directors, however, wrote about film technique as a vivid way to shape the new Soviet society by arousing and educating their audiences.

Soviet Montage Form and Style

Genre Most non-Montage Soviet films tended to be topical comedies or conventional literary adaptations. Because Montage directors emphasized physical conflict and sought to illustrate Bolshevik doctrine, they often depicted uprisings, strikes, and other clashes in the history of the revolutionary movement. Two films marking the twentieth anniversary of the failed Revolution of 1905 (*Potemkin* and *Mother*) and three celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution (*October*, *The End of St. Petersburg*, and *Moscow in October*) used the Montage style.

Other historical Montage films portrayed earlier revolutionary movements. Kozintsev and Trauberg's *The New Babylon* dealt with the doomed 1871 Paris Commune; the same pair's *SVD*, with the Decembrist plot of 1825. Some presented Tsarist-period strikes (for example, *Strike*) or the civil war (for example, *Arsenal*). Several Montage films, however, were dramas or comedies on contemporary social problems. For example, as the new government gave rise to a cumbersome bureaucracy, it became common to satirize the red tape involved in getting anything done, as in the absurdist *My Grandmother*, made in the Republic of Georgia.

Narrative What about the narrative structure of Montage films? We have seen that French Impressionist films usually center around personal actions and psychology, while German Expressionism typically uses supernatural or legendary elements to motivate distorted style. The narrative patterns of Soviet Montage films differ considerably from both these other movements. On the one hand, there are almost no supernatural events (the one exception being Dovzhenko's *Zvenigora*, which uses elements from Ukrainian folklore). Moreover, many Montage films downplay individual characters as central causal agents. Instead, drawing on a Marxist view of history, Montage films often make social forces the source of causes and effects. Characters do act and react, but they do so less as psychologically distinct individuals than as members of different social classes.

Thus a single protagonist might represent a general type or class. Pudovkin used this approach, with the young heroes of *Mother* and *The End of St. Petersburg* symbolizing different types of supporters of the revolutionary cause. Some films went so far as to eliminate major characters and to make the masses their protagonist. Eisenstein's early films—*Strike*, *Potemkin*, and *October*—all take this approach; in *October* even Lenin appears only briefly in the sweep of revolutionary events.

Vertov, however, deplored narrative. Some of his films were fairly straightforward documentaries about the new Communist society. In *Kino-Eye*, he went further and recorded various everyday events using camera and editing tricks, the result being a film more about the power of cinema than about its purported subject. His most radically modernist film, *Man with a Movie Camera*, showed an onscreen audience watching a documentary about the making of the *Man with a Movie Camera* itself. Its dizzying succession of short shots and elaborate superimpositions was so challenging that Vertov got in trouble with government authorities and had to tame his style.

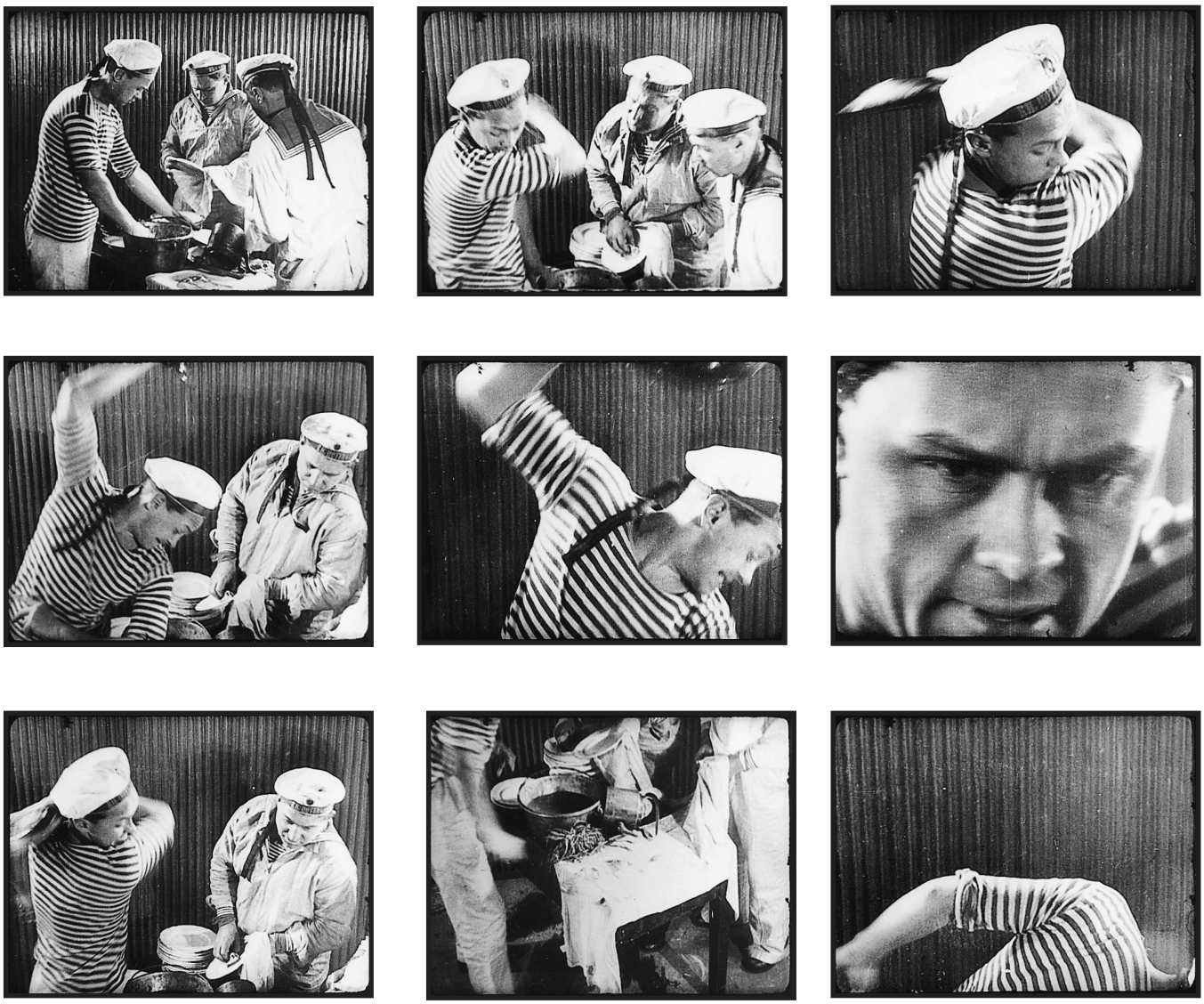
The Montage directors believed that any subject matter would affect viewers most strongly if the stylistic devices created a maximum of dynamic tension. Thus their techniques were often diametrically opposed to the smooth, seamless continuity style of Hollywood-type films. In particular, these directors juxtaposed shots in vivid, energetic ways, and the main traits that distinguish the Montage style lie in the area of editing.

Editing The search for dynamism through editing resulted in one of the most pervasive characteristics of Montage films: they tend to have more shots than other films of their era. While Hollywood practice was to use one shot per action, Montage filmmakers frequently broke individual actions down into two or more shots. Indeed, an unmoving character or object might be seen from different angles for several shots in a row (**6.17–6.19**). Such editing reflects the directors' belief that cuts, in and of themselves, stimulate the spectator. Beyond this greater quantity of shots, we can discern more specific strategies of editing, involving temporal, spatial, and graphic tensions.

While the goal of continuity editing is to create the illusion of a smooth flow of time within a scene, Montage cutting often created either overlapping or elliptical temporal relations.

Storm Over Asia

6.17–6.19 No movement occurs during these three successive shots of an officer in *Storm over Asia.*



Potemkin

6.20–6.29 Ten shots in the plate-smashing scene from *The Battleship Potemkin*, showing the repeated action of the sailor raising his arm in contradictory directions.

In *overlapping editing*, the second shot repeats part or all of the action from the previous shot. When several shots contain such repetitions, the time an action takes on the screen expands noticeably. Eisenstein's films contain some of the most famous examples of this tactic. *Potemkin* dramatizes a mutiny by sailors oppressed by their Tsarist officers; in one scene a sailor washing dishes gets upset and smashes a plate. This gesture, which would take only an instant, is spread across ten shots (**6.20–6.29**). Such overlapping helps emphasize the first rebellious action of the mutiny. In *October*, scenes such as the raising of the bridges (**Video 6.1**) and Kerensky, the leader of the

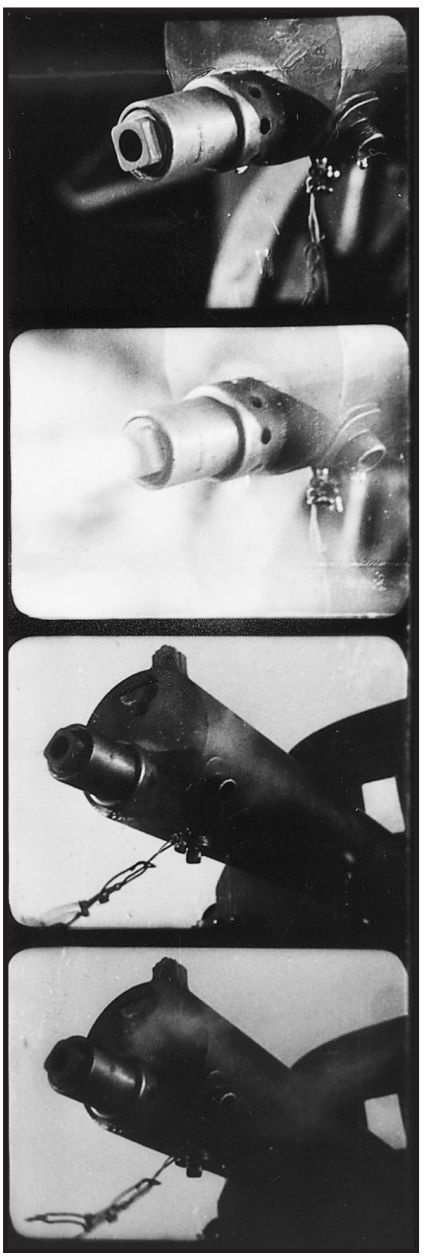
provisional government, ascending the stairs in the Winter Palace take more time than they would in reality.

Elliptical cutting creates the opposite effect. A portion of an event is left out, so the event takes less time than it would in reality. One common type of elliptical editing in Montage films is the *jump cut*, whereby the same space is shown from the same camera position in two shots, yet the mise-en-scène has been changed (**6.30**). The contradictory temporal relations created by overlapping and elliptical editing compel the spectator to make sense of the scene's action.

Despite the use of ten shots to show the plate-smashing in *Potemkin*, the action occurs rapidly because the individual shots are all short. In general, rapid, rhythmic editing is common in Montage films, whether or not the shots contain overlapping action. In early Montage films, the editing would sometimes accelerate until the shots were only a few frames long. Then, after *La Roue* and other fast-cut French Impressionist films were shown in the USSR in 1926, Montage filmmakers began to use strings of two- and one-frame shots. In most cases, however, rapid editing does not convey characters' subjective

The House on Trubnoya

6.30, *left* A jump cut in *The House on Trubnaya*: two successive close-ups show a woman's terrified face as she sees a streetcar bearing down on her; in the first her eyes are tightly closed, but a cut reveals them suddenly open.



October

6.31, *center* In *October*, a rapid burst of two-frame shots suggests the rat-tat of a machine gun.

Storm Over Asia

6.32, *right* Near the end of *Storm over Asia*, the Mongolian hero rebels against the British colonialists who have exploited him; single-frame shots alternate between him swinging his sword and the sword itself flashing against a dark background.

perceptions, as it would in French films. Instead, fast cutting may suggest rhythmic sound (**6.31**) or enhance the effect of explosive, often violent, action (**6.32**; **Video 6.2**).

As these examples of temporal relationships among shots suggest, Montage editing can also create conflict through spatial relationships. Again, the filmmakers do not guide the spectator through a clear, straightforward locale, as in a Hollywood film. Rather, the viewer must actively piece together what is going on. In the plate-smashing scene from *Potemkin*, for example, Eisenstein creates a contradictory space by mismatching the sailor's position from shot to shot. The sailor swings the plate down from behind his left shoulder (see 6.23) and then is seen in the next shot with the plate already lifted above his right shoulder (see 6.24). In 6.17–6.19, the cuts violate the axis of action, with the officer facing left, then right, and then left again.

The Soviet filmmakers also used crosscutting to create unusual spatial relationships. As we have seen, crosscutting was common in the cinema from the early teens, and it most often presented simultaneous actions in different spaces (as in Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, see Thomas H. Ince and D. W. Griffith). In the USSR, it also served more abstract purposes, linking two actions for the sake of a thematic point. Near the end of *Strike*, for example, Eisenstein cuts from a police officer bringing his fists down violently as he orders a massacre of the strikers (**6.33**) to a butcher's hands bringing a knife down to kill a bull (**6.34**). The scene continues to cut between the death of the animal and the attack on the workers—not to suggest that these two events are happening simultaneously, but to get us to see the massacre as being like a slaughter. In *Mother*, Pudovkin uses crosscutting more lyrically, moving between the hero in jail and the ice thawing on a river, suggesting the hero's hope as he learns of a plan to rescue him. There is no indication, as there might be in a French Impressionist film, that the hero is thinking of the ice. Pudovkin eventually gives the imagery a social meaning, as a political march is intercut with the surging river.

The slaughter scene in *Strike* makes use of another common Montage device: the *nondiegetic insert*. The term *diegesis* refers to the space and time of the film's story: anything that is part of the story world is diegetic. A nondiegetic element exists outside the story world. In a sound film, for example, the voice of a narrator who is not a character in the film employs nondiegetic sound. A nondiegetic insert consists of one or more shots depicting space and time unrelated to those of the story events in the film. The bull being slaughtered in *Strike* has no causal, spatial, or temporal relation to the workers. Its nondiegetic image is inserted to make a metaphorical point: the workers are being slaughtered like animals. The use of such nondiegetic shots to make a conceptual point was central to Eisenstein's theory of "intellectual montage."

October makes extensive use of intellectual montage. Its most complex use comes when a leader calls upon soldiers to fight "For God and Country." There follows a lengthy series of nondiegetic shots of statues of gods and churches from widely differing cultures (**6.35**) and then shots of military medals (**6.36**; **Video 6.1**). Intellectual montage creates its effects through conflict; by juxtaposing shots that have no apparent causal connection, the filmmaker leads the audience to create a general concept that links them.

Montage directors carried conflictual editing further by creating striking *graphic contrasts* from shot to shot. A cut might bring a distinct directional change in the composition. The Odessa steps sequence in *Potemkin*, perhaps the single most famous scene in any Montage film, gains much of its effectiveness through graphic conflict (**6.37**, **6.38**). The cumulative effect of such cuts in this scene is to help heighten the tension. In other films, graphic conflict contributes to comedy (**6.39**, **6.40**).

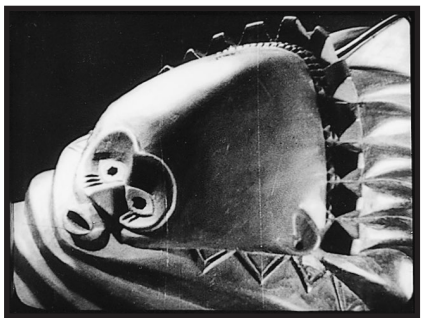
One of the most striking graphic conflicts involves cutting from one image to the same image, but the latter is flipped right to left or even turned upside down (**6.41**, **6.42**). Near the end of Pudovkin's *Mother*, mounted

Strike

Strike

6.33, ***left*** Intercutting in *Strike* compares a police officer . . .

6.34, *right* . . . to a butcher.



October

6.35, 6.36 In *October*, nondiegetic shots point up the contradictory religious beliefs and simplistic ideas of patriotism used to convince soldiers to risk their lives.

Potemkin

6.37, *left* In one shot from the Odessa steps sequence in *Potemkin*, the steps create a set of strong diagonal lines from lower left to upper right, while the running figures move quickly down and rightward.

6.38, *right* In the next shot, the composition switches this orientation, with the row of unmoving rifles extending diagonally from upper left to lower right.

My Grandmother

6.39, 6.40 *My Grandmother*'s satirical treatment of bureaucracy uses a pair of shots in which canted framings juxtapose two typists.

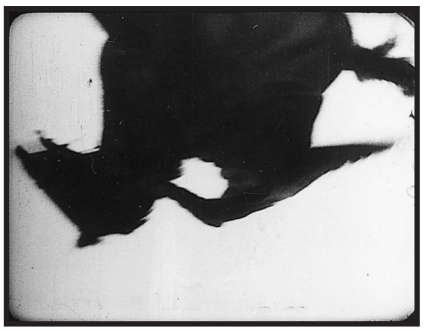
China Express

6.41, 6.42 In Ilya Trauberg's *China Express*, a medium close-up of a soldier aiming a rifle rightward is followed by the same image, but with the soldier now facing left.

soldiers attack a workers' demonstration; the pace of the editing picks up, climaxing in a flurry of brief shots of soldiers riding past the camera, first to the right, then left (**6.43**), then upside down (**6.44**). Such cuts can be jarring, especially when they enhance the impression of violent action.

Camerawork Although the Soviet directors considered cinema's artistic qualities to depend primarily on editing, they realized that editing juxtapositions would be enhanced if the individual shots were as striking as possible. Thus, they used camerawork in distinctive ways as well. Many shots in Montage films avoid conventional chest-height, straight-on

Mother



6.43, 6.44 Two quick shots from the demonstration scene in *Mother.*

China Express

6.45 A dynamic angle in *China Express*.

Mother

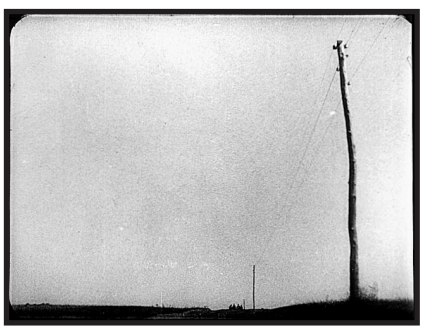
6.46 The heroine of *Mother* in the climactic demonstration scene.

Arsenal

6.47 In *Arsenal*, a train carrying Ukrainian soldiers seems to rush upward at a steep angle, emphasizing its dynamic thrust.

The End of St. Petersburg

6.48 In *The End of St. Petersburg*, Pudovkin satirized profiteers who wanted to carry on with Russia's participation in World War I by showing them only from the neck down.


Earth

Deserter

6.49, *left* In *Earth*, Dovzhenko repeatedly emphasized the vast farmlands of the Ukraine through framings that show almost nothing but sky.

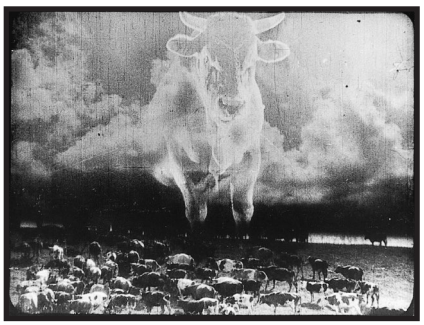
6.50, *right* Pudovkin used a similar device in *Deserter* to suggest the vulnerability of a workers' demonstration about to be attacked by police.

framing and utilize more dynamic angles. Low-angle framings place buildings or people against a blank sky, making characters look threatening (**6.45**) or heroic (**6.46**). Canted or decentered framings dynamize the image (**6.47**, **6.48**). The Montage directors were also fond of placing the horizon line extremely low in the frame (**6.49**, **6.50**).

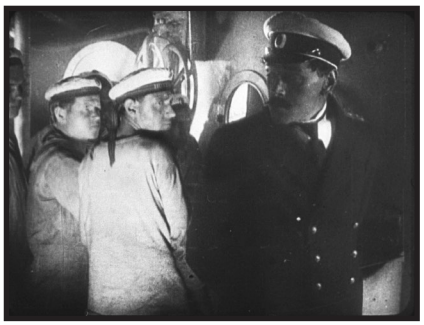
Special Effects Montage directors also exploited special-effects cinematography. Vertov's playful documentary *Man with a Movie Camera* shows off the power of the cinema through split-screen framing and superimpositions (**6.51**; **Video 6.3**). Eisenstein's film about collective farming, *Old and New*, uses a superimposition of a bull towering above a field full of cows to suggest how important this one animal has been to the building of a successful farm (**6.52**). Although such camera tricks were commonly used for subjective effects in French Impressionism, Soviet directors often employed them to make symbolic points. (The building that splits in *Man with a Movie Camera* is the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, home of traditional prerevolutionary opera and ballet.)

Man with a Movie Camera

6.51 In *Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov makes a huge building split like a broken egg by exposing each side of the frame separately and rolling the camera in opposite directions for each.


Old and New

6.52 A conceptual use of special effects in *Old and New.*


Potemkin

6.53 In *Potemkin*, an officer glances suspiciously at some sailors. The composition splits into two distinct halves, dark and bright, with the lighting on the figures' faces matching the color of their costumes.

The New Babylon

6.54 In *The New Babylon*, the heroine stands atop a barricade built by the Paris communards; her plain dress contrasts with the lacy frills on a department-store mannequin.

Potemkin

6.55 In *Potemkin*, a high-angle shot down the side of the battleship shows men on the upper level, moving left to right, while the group on the deck below move right to left.

Old and New

6.56 A contrast in volumes in *Old and New*, as a bull looms hugely in the foreground while farmers and a cow appear as tiny figures below it.

Mise-en-Scène Because many Soviet films dealt with historical and social situations, some elements of their mise-en-scène tended to be realistic. Scenes might be shot on location in a factory, as *Strike* and *Mother* were. Costumes often served primarily to indicate class position. Yet the Montage filmmakers also realized that dynamic tension between elements was not solely a matter of joining shots. Juxtapositions could be made within the shot as well, using mise-en-scène elements to heighten the impact on the viewer. Contrasting textures, shapes, volumes, colors, and the like could be placed within a single frame (**6.53**, **6.54**).

We have seen how shots containing opposed directions of movement might be edited together. A single shot can use this principle by setting up more than one direction of figure movement (**6.55**). Patterns might also create oppositions within the shot; in the plate-smashing scene from *Potemkin* (see 6.20–6.29), the horizontal stripes of the sailor's shirt clash with the vertical stripes of the wall behind him. Although the precise effect of the juxtaposition is difficult to define, we can imagine that our impression of the scene would be very different if the wall were simply blank. Also, mise-en-scène elements arranged in different planes in the depth of the shot could create juxtapositions of volume (**6.56**). When shots with visual juxtapositions are edited together with other shots, the many conflicting relationships can be complex indeed.

Lighting also gives Montage films a distinctive look. Soviet films frequently used no fill light on the sets, so characters appeared against black backgrounds. Note in **6.57** how the front of the officer's face is relatively dark, while the sides are strongly lit; this approach to lighting actors is common in Montage films.

Montage films used a variety of types of acting, ranging from realistic to highly stylized—often within the same film. Because so many characters in Soviet films represented certain social classes or professions, directors used *typage*, casting nonactors whose physical appearances would instantly

Mother

6.57 A typical use of an unlit background in *Mother*.

Old and New

6.58 For the unglamorous role of the peasant heroine of *Old and New*, Eisenstein cast a real peasant.

The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks

6.59 In *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks*, Khokhlova uses eccentric acting in playing a crook who vamps Mr. West.

The Tailor from Torzhok

6.60, 6.61 In *The Tailor from Torzhok*, the star mugs broadly, at one point glancing at the camera and crossing his eyes.

suggest what sort of people they were playing (**6.58**). There was no need for the nonactor to have the same job in real life; for *Potemkin*, Eisenstein chose the small, fastidious man who plays the doctor because he "looked" like a doctor—though he actually made his living shoveling coal.

Typage was a gesture toward realism, but many performers in Montage films borrowed stylized techniques from Constructivist theater and from the circus: *biomechanics* and *eccentricity*. As in the theater, biomechanical film acting stressed physical control rather than subtle emotion. The Montage filmmakers delighted in having their actors punch one another or scramble about over factory equipment. Eccentricity emphasized the grotesque; performers behaved almost like clowns or slapstick comics. Alexandra Khokhlova, Kuleshov's wife and a member of his workshop, offered vivid instances of eccentric acting. Tall and gangly, she avoided the glamorous image of the female star; instead, she grimaced and used angular gestures (**6.59**). Eisenstein's *Strike* and Kozintsev and Trauberg's silent films all contain eccentric performances.

Of the three avant-garde movements we have examined in Chapters 4 through 6, only the Soviet Montage style lasted into the sound era. In Chapter 9, we discuss how the Montage filmmakers applied their approach to sound.

OTHER SOVIET FILMS

During the Montage movement's existence, perhaps fewer than thirty films were made in the style. Nevertheless, as in France and Germany, these avant-garde films were prestigious and influential. Both at home and abroad, filmmakers picked up techniques of montage framing and editing.

Non-Montage films covered a wide range of genres. Although Soviet silent comedies are seldom seen today, there were plenty of them. Slapstick comedian Igor Ilinsky, a sort of Russian Adam Sandler, was the decade's most popular star. In *The Tailor from Torzhok* (made by Protazanov in 1925 to publicize the government lottery), Ilinsky plays a tailor frantically seeking a winning lottery ticket he has lost (**6.60**, **6.61**). A light tone also prevails in the crime serial *Miss Mend* (codirected by veteran filmmakers Fyodor Ozep and Barnet, a Kuleshov alumnus, in 1925). In this fantasy, three American workers from the "Rocfeller" company hear of a plot to poison the Soviet Union's water supply and, in a spirit of class solidarity, foil the villain.

Despite the Montage directors' downplaying of major stars, other films exploited the fame of established stage actors by casting them in dramas. In a few cases, top stars

Wings of a Serf

Decembrists

6.62, *left* In 1926, the acclaimed theater actor, Leonid Leonidov appeared as Ivan the Terrible in Yuri Tarich's *Wings of a Serf*; his performance aided the film's widespread success abroad.

6.63, *right* Lavish production values in a conventional Soviet film, *Decembrists*.

of the famous Moscow Art Theater, established by Konstantin Stanislavsky in 1898 (and considered by many young filmmakers to be a bastion of conservative style), agreed to act in films (**6.62**). Other Moscow Art Theater actors such as Ivan Moskvin and Mikhail Chekhov starred in films, and the only surviving film performance by the great Constructivist stage director Meyerhold is in *The White Eagle* (1928).

A similar attempt at prestige came with historical epics and literary adaptations. Two popular films of this type were Viktor Gardin's *Poet and Tsar* (1927), a biography of the poet Aleksandr Pushkin, and *Decembrists* (1927, Alexander Ivanovsky). In a 1927 meeting to discuss the problems of Sovkino, Cubo-Futurist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky dismissed the former film contemptuously: "Take 'Poet and Tsar' for example. The picture is liked—but when you stop to think about it, what bosh, what a monstrosity."[3] Similarly, *Decembrists*, with its large ballroom set (**6.63**), looked like a tired version of Russian historical dramas of the prerevolutionary era. The Montage directors found such films conservative and thus diametrically opposed to their own approaches to filmmaking.

THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN AND THE END OF THE MONTAGE MOVEMENT

As we have seen, several of the early Montage films were successfully exported and were praised at home for their political content. As a result, between 1927 and 1930, the movement's activities intensified. At the same time, however, criticisms were increasingly being leveled at the Montage filmmakers by government and film-industry officials. The main charge was *formalism*, a vague term implying that a film was too complex for mass audiences and that its makers were more interested in film style than in correct ideology.

Ironically, the very recovery of the film industry, which the export of Montage films helped create, led to the decline of the movement. In 1927, for the first time, the industry made more money from its own films than from imported ones. Official policy encouraged the industry to cut back its foreign trade. Sovkino and Lunacharsky came under attack for making films—including those of the Montage movement—that were more appropriate for sophisticated foreigners than for the uneducated peasant population at home.

Criticized by the press, the major filmmakers had difficulties getting scripts approved and projects funded. Kuleshov came under fire first. Then Vertov had to move from his base in Moscow to make *Man with a Movie Camera* for the Ukrainian national company Vufku. Critics charged that Kozintsev and Trauberg's eccentric stylization was frivolous and obscure. The prestige that Eisenstein gained through *Potemkin* protected him at first, but as he explored the possibility of creating abstract ideas through intellectual montage in the late 1920s, he too faced growing oppositions. For a time, Pudovkin was spared such attacks, and he managed to keep making Montage-style films until 1933, when his *Deserter* brought the movement to a close.

A turning point for the Soviet film industry came in March 1928, when the First Communist Party Conference on Film Questions was held. Until then, the government had left film matters largely to the control of Narkompros and other, smaller organizations scattered through the republics. Now the USSR was instituting the First Five-Year Plan, a major push to expand industrial output. As part of the plan, the cinema was to be centralized. The goal was to increase the number of films and to build factories to supply all the industry's needs. Eventually, it was hoped, imports of raw film stock, cameras, lighting fixtures, and other equipment would be eliminated. Similarly, exportation would not be necessary, and all films could be tailored strictly to the needs of the workers and peasants.

The implementation of the First Five-Year Plan in the cinema came slowly. Over the next two years, the

government still put little money into the industry. This delay probably helped prolong the Montage movement. Soon, however, circumstances changed. In 1929, Eisenstein left the country to study sound filmmaking abroad. Spending most of his time working on abortive projects, first in Hollywood and then in Mexico, he did not return until 1932. Also in 1929, control over the cinema was taken away from Narkompros and turned over to the Movie Committee of the Soviet Union. Now Lunacharsky had little input, being only one of many members of the new body. In 1930, the film industry was further centralized by the formation of Soyuzkino, a company that would handle all production, distribution, and exhibition throughout the republics of the Soviet Union. The head of Soyuzkino was Boris Shumyatsky, a Communist Party bureaucrat without film experience. Unlike Lunacharsky, Shumyatsky had no sympathy for the Montage filmmakers.

Soon the attacks on those filmmakers intensified. In 1931, for example, while Eisenstein was in North America, an article criticized his films for their supposed "petty bourgeois" tendencies. If Eisenstein could strengthen his ties to the proletariat, the author concluded, he might "create real revolutionary cinema productions. But we must on no account minimize the difficulties confronting him. The way out of this crisis is possible only through a stubborn campaign for reeducation, through merciless exposure and criticism of his first films."[4] All the major Montage filmmakers, and, indeed, modernist artists in every medium, eventually adopted more accessible styles.

The Soviet Montage movement's influence lingered, however. Leftist filmmakers in other countries, especially documentarists such as Scottish-born John Grierson and Dutch-born Joris Ivens, adopted heroic, low-angle framings and dynamic cutting for similar propaganda purposes. Kuleshov's, Pudovkin's, and Eisenstein's theoretical writings have been read by critics and filmmakers ever since they were translated. Few filmmakers have used the full range of radical Montage devices, but nonetheless the movement has inspired creative filmmakers the world over.

During the early 1930s, the Soviet film industry moved toward an official policy that required all films to follow an approach called *Socialist Realism*. We examine that and other developments in Chapter 12.

REFERENCES

1. Grigori Kozintsev, Leonid Trauberg, Sergei Yutkevich, and Georgi Kryzhitsky, "Eccentrism," tr. Richard Taylor, in *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896-1939*, ed. Taylor and Ian Christie (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 58.
2. Sergei Eisenstein, "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram," in his *Film Form*, tr. and ed. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949), p. 37.
3. Quoted in Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 229.
4. Ivan Anisimov, "The Films of Eisenstein," *International Literature* 3 (1931): 114.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On some Soviet classics: "The ten best films of ... 1924" and "The ten best films of ... 1925" and "The ten best films of ... 1926"
On the influence of *The Battleship Potemkin* on Hitchcock: "Sir Alfred must have his set pieces: THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (1934)"
On the influence of *Potemkin* on Quentin Tarantino: "(50) days of summer (movies), Part 2"
On Ermler's *Fragment of an Empire*: "Two More Classics from Flicker Alley"

CHAPTER 7

Way Down East

THE LATE SILENT ERA IN HOLLYWOOD, 1920–1928

The Clown's Little Brother

During World War I, the United States became the global economic leader. The center of finance shifted from London to New York, and American ships carried goods all over the world. Despite a brief, intense recession in 1921, resulting primarily from the shift back to a peacetime economy, the 1920s were a period of prosperity for many sectors of society. Republican administrations were in power, and a conservative, pro-business approach dominated the country. American consumer goods, including movies, continued to make inroads in many foreign countries.

In contrast to this fiscal conservatism, society seemed to lose much of its restraint during the Roaring Twenties. The passage of the Volstead Act (1919), outlawing alcoholic beverages, led to the excesses of the age of Prohibition. Bootleg liquor was readily available, and visiting speakeasies or attending wild drinking parties became common among all classes. Before the war, women had grown their hair long, worn floor-length dresses, and danced sedately. Now they created scandals by bobbing their hair, wearing short skirts, doing the Charleston, and smoking in public.

Many sectors of society, though, were shut off from the general prosperity and sophistication of the 1920s. Racism was rampant, with the Ku Klux Klan growing after its revival in 1915 and the stiffening of immigration quotas to keep certain groups out of the United States. Workers in agriculture and mining fared poorly. The film industry, however, benefited from the high level of capital available during this period, and its films bore traces of the fast pace of life in the Jazz Age.

THEATER CHAINS AND THE EXPANSION OF THE INDUSTRY

The American film industry, expanding hugely during World War I, continued to grow in the postwar decade. Despite the recession of 1921, the era was one of prosperity and intensive business investment. Major Wall Street firms became interested in the young film industry. Between 1922 and 1930, total investment in the industry leaped from $78 to $850 million. The average weekly attendance at American movie theaters doubled from 1922 (40 million) to 1928 (80 million). Hollywood's exports continued to grow nearly unchecked until the mid-1920s, leveling off only because virtually all foreign markets were sated.

Central to the industry's growth was a strategy of buying and building movie theaters. By owning theater chains, the big producers ensured an outlet for their films. Producers could then confidently raise budgets for individual films. Studios competed in offering eye-catching production values. A new generation of directors came to prominence, and Hollywood also attracted more foreign filmmakers, who brought stylistic innovations. If the 1910s had seen the formation of the film industry, the next decade witnessed its expansion into a sophisticated set of institutions.

Vertical Integration

The most obvious sign of the growth of the film industry was its increasing vertical integration. The biggest firms jockeyed for power by combining production and distribution with expanding chains of theaters.

At first, the main theater chains were regional. In 1917, seeking to challenge the power of the big Hollywood firms, a group of local theater chains formed its own production company, First National Exhibitors' Circuit. Its main member was the Stanley Company of America, a Philadelphia-based regional chain. Hollywood firms such as Famous Players–Lasky, Universal, and Fox were suddenly faced with a competitor that combined production, distribution, and exhibition.

This three-tiered vertical integration guaranteed that a company's films would find distribution and exhibition. The bigger the theater chain owned by the firm, the wider its films' exposure would be.

Although First National's production wing never became really profitable, it goaded other firms to integrate vertically. Adolph Zukor, head of Famous Players–Lasky and its distribution wing, Paramount, began buying theaters in 1920. In 1925, during a second wave of theater-buying by the major firms, Famous Players–Lasky merged with Balaban & Katz, a Chicago-based theater chain controlling many of the biggest auditoriums in the Midwest. The result was the first production-distribution-exhibition firm with a truly national theater chain. Zukor marked the change by renaming the theater circuit Publix Theaters. The firm as a whole became Paramount-Publix. By the early 1930s, it owned 1,210 North American theaters, as well as some theaters abroad. Paramount-Publix's extensive holdings made it the subject of repeated government antitrust investigation and litigation that would lead to major changes in the film industry after World War II.

Another important firm that achieved vertical integration during this era was Loew's, Inc. Marcus Loew had begun as a nickelodeon owner, expanded into vaudeville, and built up a large chain of movie theaters by the late 1910s. In 1919, he moved into production by acquiring a medium-size firm, Metro, run by Louis B. Mayer. With the purchase of Goldwyn Pictures in 1924, Loew combined his production wing into Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). After Paramount, MGM became the second largest of the Hollywood companies.

The chains owned by the vertically integrated firms encompassed a small portion of the nation's 15,000 theaters. In the mid-1920s, the Publix chain had roughly 500 houses, while MGM had only 200. Yet the three main chains included many of the big first-run theaters, with thousands of seats and high admission prices. By late in the decade, about three-quarters of box-office receipts came from these large theaters. Smaller urban and rural theaters had to wait to get a film on a subsequent run and often received worn prints.

As the big Hollywood companies expanded, they developed a system of distribution that would maximize their profits and keep other firms at the margins of the market. In dealing with the theaters they did not own, they employed *block booking*, meaning that any exhibitor who wanted films with high box-office potential had to rent other, less desirable films from the company. Exhibitors might be forced to book an entire year's program in advance. Because most theaters changed programs at least twice a week and each big firm usually made only around fifty films a year, a theater could deal with more than one firm. Similarly, the studios needed films from other firms to keep their own theater programs full. The biggest firms cooperated among themselves developing into a mature oligopoly during the 1920s.

Picture Palaces

Because the big theaters were so important, the major companies made them opulent to attract patrons, not simply through the films being shown but through the promise of an exciting moviegoing experience. The 1920s were the age of the *picture palace*, offering thousands of sets, fancy lobbies, uniformed ushers, and orchestral accompaniment to the films. Ordinarily attendance dropped during the summer, so in 1917 the Balaban & Katz chain pioneered the use of air-conditioning—a major draw in a period when home air-conditioning was unknown. Picture palaces gave working- and middle-class patrons an unaccustomed taste of luxury. Big theaters also offered a lengthy film program in addition to the feature, including newsreels and comic shorts. Silent films always had musical accompaniment. In the big palaces, this would usually entail a live orchestra; a smaller palace might have a chamber group or pipe organ; and small-town and second-run houses could offer only a piano player. Any of these might perform an overture and musical interludes. Some theaters even had live-action playlets and musical numbers interspersed with the film program.

There were two types of architecture: conventional and atmospheric. Conventional palaces were imitations of legitimate theaters, often incorporating elaborate ornamentation based on Italian baroque and rococo styles. Huge chandeliers, domes, and balconies dominated the interiors. The atmospheric palace gave the spectator the impression of sitting in an auditorium that opened onto a night sky. The dark-blue dome would have light-bulb stars, and projectors cast moving clouds onto the ceiling by projectors. The decor might imitate exotic places, such as a Spanish villa or an Egyptian temple. As the 1920s progressed, theaters got more flamboyant (**7.1**). The Depression would soon put an end to such extravagant theater building.

Irving Browning/The New York Historical Society/Archive Photos/Getty Images

7.1 Part of the interior of the Brooklyn Paramount (built in 1928). This theater combined conventional and atmospheric approaches to picture-palace design, incorporating trees and false sky glimpsed through the alcoves, topping it all with an elaborately decorated ceiling.

The Big Three and the Little Five

At the top of the industry sat the Big Three, the vertically integrated firms that owned major theater chains: Paramount-Publix, Loew's (MGM), and First National. Trailing behind, but still important, were the Little Five, firms that owned few or no theaters: Universal, Fox, the Producers Distributing Corporation, the Film Booking Office, and Warner Bros.

Under founder Carl Laemmle, Universal continued into the 1920s to concentrate on relatively low-budget films aimed at smaller venues. Despite a strong distribution wing, the firm had few theaters. Several major directors (John Ford, Erich von Stroheim) and stars (Lon Chaney) worked there early in the decade, but they were soon drawn away by higher salaries. For a time Universal employed the successful young producer Irving Thalberg, who helped the firm move into higher-quality, big-budget films. Soon Thalberg also left, becoming a major force in shaping MGM's policies. Later in the decade, German-born Laemmle was in the forefront in hiring émigré directors, who brought a brooding, distinctive style to the studio's output.

Fox also continued to concentrate on lower-budget popular fare, including its Westerns with William Farnum and Tom Mix. Fox launched a theater chain in 1925, making it one of the strongest of the Little Five. The company had a small stable of prestige directors: John Ford, Raoul Walsh, F. W. Murnau, and Frank Borzage.

Warner Bros. was smaller, possessing neither theaters nor a distribution wing. It scored a considerable success, however, with a series of films starring a German shepherd, Rin-Tin-Tin. More surprisingly, Warners hired German director Ernst Lubitsch, and he made several important films there. In 1924, Warners drew on Wall Street investors' new willingness to put money into the film industry. It began a major expansion, acquiring theaters and other assets. The firm's investment in new sound technology would thrust it to the forefront of the industry within a few years.

The two other members of the Little Five were relatively small firms. The short-lived Producers Distributing Corporation (1924–1928) was notable mainly for

producing a series of Cecil B. De Mille's films after he left Famous Players–Lasky in 1925. The Film Booking Office was formed in 1922 and turned out popular action films. In 1929, it became the basis for the production portion of a much more important new firm, RKO.

Standing apart from these eight firms was United Artists (UA), formed by Mary Pickford, Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D. W. Griffith in 1919. UA was a distribution firm, owning neither production facilities nor theaters. It existed to distribute films produced independently by its four owners, who each had a small production company. Prior contractual commitments by the four founders delayed the firm's initial releases for a year, and Chaplin's first UA film, *A Woman of Paris* (1923), was not a hit. In 1924, producer Joseph Schenck took over management of UA. By adding stars Rudolph Valentino, Norma Talmadge, Buster Keaton, and Gloria Swanson, as well as prestigious producer Samuel Goldwyn, Schenck stepped up the rate of release of UA films. However, UA still failed to make a profit in most years.

THE MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF AMERICA

As the American film industry expanded, so too did efforts on the part of various social groups to increase censorship. By the late 1910s and early 1920s, there was call for a national censorship law, and more local boards were formed. Many postwar films exploited Roaring Twenties subject matter: bootleg liquor, jazz, flappers, and wild parties. Cecil B. De Mille's sex comedies presented adultery as frivolous, even glamorous. Erich von Stroheim's *Blind Husbands* (1919) similarly treated a married woman's flirtation as a fascinating violation of social norms.

Soon a series of scandals focused attention on the less palatable aspects of the lifestyles of famous filmmakers, including sex scandals and flagrant violations of the new Prohibition law. Mary Pickford's image as America's sweetheart received a blow in 1920 when she divorced her first husband to marry Douglas Fairbanks. In 1921, comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle was charged with manslaughter when a young actress died during a drunken party; although he was acquitted, the charges wrecked his career. The following year, director William Desmond Taylor was mysteriously murdered in circumstances that revealed his affairs with several well-known actresses. In 1923, the handsome, athletic star Wallace Reid died of morphine addiction. The public increasingly viewed Hollywood as promoting excess and decadence.

Partly in an effort to avoid government censorship and clean up Hollywood's image, the main studios formed a trade organization, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA). To head it, in 1922 they hired Will Hays, then postmaster general under Warren Harding. Hays had proved his flair for publicity by chairing the Republican National Committee. That flair, combined with his access to powerful figures in Washington and his Presbyterian background, made him useful to the film industry.

Hays's strategy was to push the producers to eliminate the offensive content of their films and to include morals clauses in studio contracts. Despite Arbuckle's acquittal, Hays banned his films. In 1924, the MPPDA issued the "Formula," a vague document urging studios to avoid the "kind of picture which should not be produced." Predictably, it had little effect, and in 1927 the Hays office (as the MPPDA came to be known) adopted the more explicit "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" list. "Don'ts" included "the illegal traffic in drugs," "licentious or suggestive nudity," and "ridicule of the clergy." "Be Carefuls" involved "the use of the flag," "brutality and possible gruesomeness," "methods of smuggling," and "deliberate seduction of girls." The list dealt as much with the depiction of crimes as with sexual content. Producers continued to circumvent the guidelines, however, and in the early 1930s the list would be replaced by the much more elaborate Production Code (see Chapter 10).

Although the Hays Office is usually thought of as a strategy to block domestic censorship, it also served the industry in other ways. The MPPDA gathered information on film markets at home and abroad, keeping up, for example, with censorship rules in various countries. Hays established a foreign department that battled several European quotas aimed largely at American exports. In 1926, Hays's group convinced Congress to form the Motion Picture Division of the Department of Commerce. That division helped sell American films abroad by gathering information and bringing more pressure against harmful regulations. Indeed, the formation of the MPPDA provided a clear signal that motion pictures had become a major American industry.

STUDIO FILMMAKING

Style and Technological Changes

As the Hollywood industry grew and consolidated, filmmakers polished the classical continuity style that had developed in the 1910s.

By the 1920s, the big production firms had *dark studios* that kept out all sunlight and allowed entire scenes to be illuminated by artificial lights. Scenes' backgrounds were kept inconspicuous with a low *fill light*, while the main figures were outlined with a glow of *backlight*, usually cast from the rear top of the set (**7.2**). The *key*, or brightest light, came from one side of the camera, while a dimmer secondary light from the other side created fill that softened shadows and kept backgrounds visible but inconspicuous. This *three-point lighting system* (fill, backlighting, and key) became standard in Hollywood cinematography. It created glamorous, consistent compositions from shot to shot.

7.2 Light coming from the upper rear of the set outlines the characters in *The Marriage Circle*.

By the 1920s, the continuity editing system had become sophisticated indeed. Eyeline matches, cut-ins, and small variations of framing could successively reveal the most important portions of a scene's space. In John Ford's 1920 Western *Just Pals*, for example, a mother waits in anguish as her son supposedly drowns a litter of unwanted kittens. In fact, he only pretends that he has killed them. This complex action is gradually revealed without intertitles through a series of carefully framed details observed by the heroine (**7.3–7.11**).

By the late 1910s, most of the major technological innovations in American filmmaking had been made. One distinct change in the next decade was a new approach to cinematography. Before about 1919, most films were shot with a hard-edge, sharp-focus look. Then some filmmakers began to place gauzy fabrics or filters in front of their lenses to create soft, blurry images. Special lenses could keep the foreground action in focus while making the background less distinct. This technique enhanced the classical narrative style by concentrating the spectator's attention on the main action while deemphasizing less important elements. The result of such techniques was the *soft style* of cinematography, used most extensively during the 1920s and 1930s. This style derived from still photography and especially the Pictorialist school, pioneered by such photographers as Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen early in the century.

D. W. Griffith was one of the early proponents of this style. He worked with cinematographer Hendrik Sartov, who had begun as a still photographer, to film soft-focus shots of Lillian Gish and some landscapes in *Broken Blossoms* (1919). They further explored the approach in *Way Down East* (1920; **7.12**, **7.13**). The soft style was dominant by the early sound era and remained prominent until a new hard-edged style became fashionable in the 1940s.

Another major innovation of this era came with the gradual adoption of a new *panchromatic* type of film stock. The film stock used previously had been *orthochromatic*. It was sensitive only to the purple, blue, and green portions of the visible spectrum. Yellow and red light barely registered on it, so objects of these colors appeared nearly black in the finished film. For example, the lips of actors wearing ordinary red lipstick appear very dark in many silent films. Purple and blue registered on the film stock as nearly white, so it was difficult to photograph cloudy skies: a blue sky with clouds simply washed out to a uniform white.

Panchromatic film stock, available by the early 1910s, registered the whole range of the visible spectrum, from purple to red, with nearly equal sensitivity. Thus it could record a sky with the clouds visible against the blue background, or red lips as shades of gray. But panchromatic stock had problems as well: it was expensive, it deteriorated quickly if not used right away, and it demanded much greater illumination to expose a satisfactory image. During the 1910s and early 1920s, it was primarily used outdoors in bright sunlight for landscape shots (to capture cloud scenes) or indoors for studio close-ups that could be brightly lit. By 1925, Eastman Kodak had made its panchromatic motion-picture stock cheaper and more stable. Soon the stock was also made more sensitive, requiring less light for proper exposure. By 1927, the Hollywood studios were quickly switching over to panchromatic stock. The result was not a radical change in the look of films, but panchromatic did permit filmmakers to make shots of actors who were not wearing makeup and to shoot a greater variety of subjects without using special filters or adjusting costume colors. Panchromatic soon became the standard internationally.

In the years after World War I, the technical sophistication of the Hollywood studios was the envy of the world. In addition, income from the huge American exhibition market and from expanded exports allowed higher budgets, especially for the most prestigious films. These could cost in the neighborhood of ten times more than comparable films made in Europe.

Just Pals

7.3 Walking near town, the heroine of *Just Pals* pauses and looks off left.

Just Pals

7.4 An eyeline match reveals what she sees, a little boy with a bag by a fence, looking off right.

Just Pals

7.5 Another cut takes us to a medium shot of the boy's mother, also by the fence, weeping.

Just Pals

7.6 A second shot of the boy shows him looking through the fence apprehensively and beginning to empty the bag onto the ground.

Just Pals

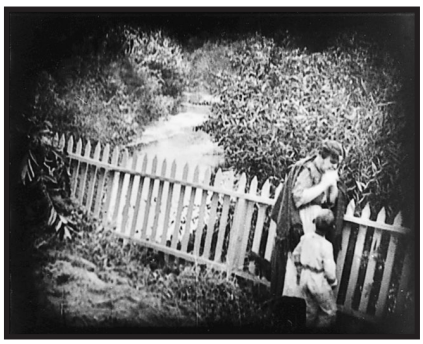
7.7 A cut to the ground shows a litter of kittens falling out of the bag.

Just Pals

7.8 A long shot shows the whole space: the mother and son are by a river, and he throws the empty bag into the water.

Just Pals

7.9 We see the bag hit the water in a closer view.


Just Pals

7.10 The long-shot framing shows the pair moving away, the boy comforting his mother, who has not turned around to watch any of his actions.

Just Pals

7.11 After seven shots of their actions, we return to a closer view of the heroine, reacting in horror.

Such resources, in combination with the fully formulated classical Hollywood style, gave filmmakers considerable flexibility. They could apply the same stylistic methods to many types of movies.

During the 1920s, a new generation of filmmakers came to the fore, and they would dominate American filmmaking over three decades. Some, such as John Ford and King Vidor, had started directing on a modest scale in the

Way Down East

7.12 A shimmering soft-focus landscape shot in *Way Down East* resembles high-art still photographs of the period.

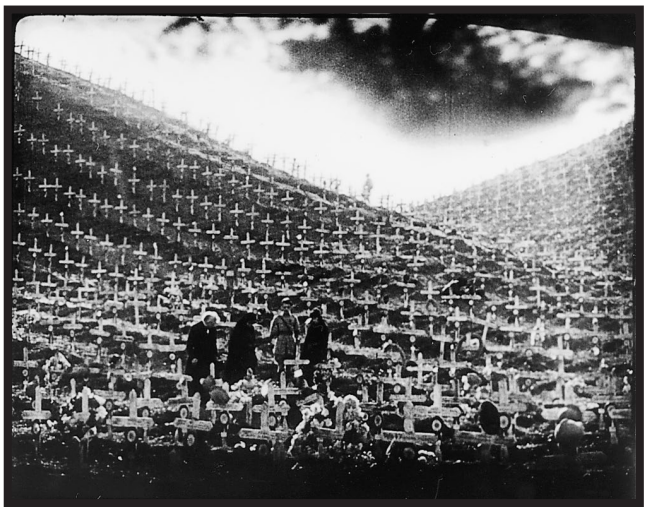
Way Down East

7.13 Soft-focus cinematography in *Way Down East*, soft also considerably enhanced glamorous shots, as in this medium close-up of Lillian Gish.

1910s, but they now rose to fame. Similarly, although a few stars of earlier years remained popular, new ones now came forward. Older genres developed, as when slapstick comedies and Westerns, typically relegated to short subjects, became more respected. New genres also appeared, such as the antiwar film.

Big-Budget Films of the 1920s

A film that reflected the growth of Hollywood and its newly ambitious productions was *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, directed by Rex Ingram and released in 1921. It was a big-budget project, running more than two hours and based on a recent best-selling novel. Ingram, who had directed several minor films, was given considerable control over the project and created an epic picture that was a huge success. The film deals with a South American family's changing fortunes during World War I, and it took a different attitude toward the conflict than earlier war films had. Although



The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

7.14 The final scene of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* shows a military cemetery with innumerable crosses, suggesting the horrors of war.

it still showed the Germans as evil "Huns," it presented the conflict as destructive rather than glorious (**7.14**). This antiwar stance would be common in other films of the decade.

The film's triumph was, however, probably mainly due to its stars, Rudolph Valentino and Alice Terry, who played the doomed central couple. They rose to immediate stardom (**7.15**). Valentino was hired by Paramount and became a matinee idol, popularizing the "Latin lover" in such films as *Blood and Sand* (1922, Fred Niblo). His early death in 1926 provoked frenzied grief among his fans.

Cecil B. De Mille had been extraordinarily prolific from 1914 on. During the 1920s, he moved on to more sumptuous films at Paramount. One of his primary genres was the sex comedy, often starring Gloria Swanson, one of the era's top stars. De Mille's sophisticated comedies helped earn Hollywood a reputation for being risqué. He exploited expensive women's fashions, rich decors, and sexually provocative situations, as in *Why Change Your Wife?* (1920; **7.16**, **7.17**).

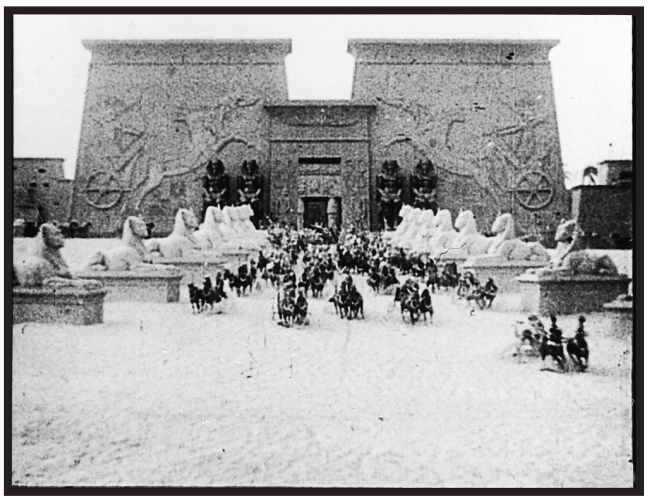
When his work came under fire from censorship groups, De Mille responded with films that mixed steamy melodrama with religious subject matter. *The Ten Commandments* (1923) had an introductory story depicting a young man who scoffs at morality and vows to break all the commandments; the main part of the film was an historical epic showing Moses leading the Jews out of Egypt (**7.18**). De Mille's biggest religious production of this era was *The King of Kings* (1927), controversial for its onscreen depiction of Christ. In the sound era, De Mille would become identified with historical and religious epics.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

7.15 Glamorous photography in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* helped make Rudolph Valentino and Alice Terry stars.

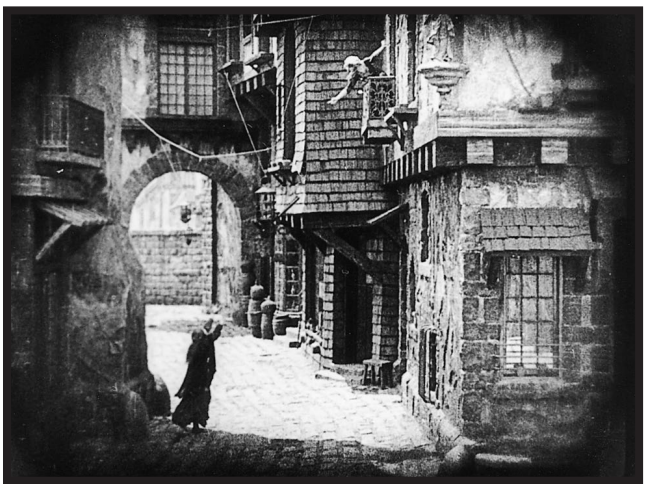
Why Change Your Wife?

7.16, 7.17 In *Why Change Your Wife?* Gloria Swanson plays a mousy wife who saves her marriage to Thomas Meighan by adopting a daring wardrobe.



The Ten Commandments

7.18 The Egyptian forces set out in pursuit of the fleeing Israelites in front of a massive set in *The Ten Commandments*.

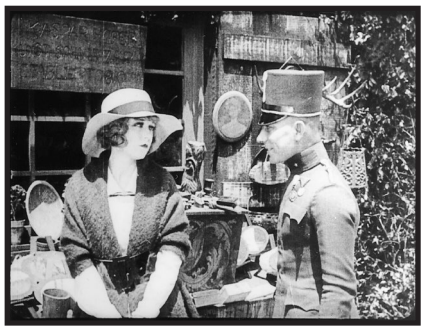


Orphans of the Storm

7.19 A poignant moment in *Orphans of the Storm*, as the two separated sisters briefly encounter and then lose each other again in the streets of Paris.

Similarly, after D. W. Griffith cofounded United Artists, he made several big historical films. Just as he had been inspired by Italian epics like *Cabiria* to make *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*, now he was influenced by Ernst Lubitsch's postwar German films. Griffith's greatest success of the era was *Orphans of the Storm* (1922), set during the French Revolution. It starred the Gish sisters, Lillian and Dorothy, both affiliated with Griffith since the early 1910s (**7.19**). Lillian's career in particular flourished during this decade, as she worked with such major directors as King Vidor (*La Bohème*, 1926) and Victor Sjöström. Griffith made another historical epic, *America* (1924), concerning the American Revolutionary War. His next film, however, was quite different: a naturalistic tale of difficulties in postwar Germany called *Isn't Life Wonderful* (1924). Griffith's mid-1920s films were increasingly unprofitable, and he soon abandoned independent production to make a few films for Paramount. He completed two films in the early sound era, including the ambitious *Abraham Lincoln* (1930), but then was forced into retirement until his death in 1948.

As Griffith's case suggests, not all filmmakers who commanded large budgets in Hollywood during the 1920s fit comfortably into its efficient system. Erich von Stroheim had begun in the mid-1910s as an assistant to Griffith. He also acted, typically playing the "evil Hun" figure in World War I films. Universal elevated him to director in 1919 with *Blind Husbands*, the story of a couple on a mountaineering holiday; the wife is nearly seduced away from her complacent husband by a scoundrel, played by von Stroheim (**7.20**). The success of this film led Universal to give von Stroheim a larger budget for his second film, *Foolish Wives* (1922), in which he played another


Blind Husbands

Greed

7.20, *left* Erich von Stroheim as the villainous seducer (termed by publicists "the man you love to hate") in *Blind Husbands*.

7.21, *right* The ending of *Greed*, with the protagonist trapped in Death Valley and killing his old enemy, manifests the bleak tone that made *Greed* unpopular with its initial audiences.

predatory role. Von Stroheim exceeded the budget considerably, partly by building a large set reproducing Monte Carlo on the studio backlot. Universal turned this to its advantage by advertising *Foolish Wives* as the first million-dollar movie. More problematically, von Stroheim's first version ran over six hours. The studio pared it down to roughly two and a half hours.

Von Stroheim's Hollywood career involved several such problems with excessive length and budgets. Producer Irving Thalberg replaced him when cost overruns threatened his next project, *The Merry-Go-Round* (1923). Von Stroheim then moved to the independent production firm Goldwyn to make *Greed*, an adaptation of Frank Norris's naturalistic novel *McTeague*, which ran nine hours. Von Stroheim cut it by about half. By now the Goldwyn company had become part of MGM, and Thalberg took the film away from von Stroheim and reedited again. The final version ran about two hours, shorn of one major plot line and many scenes. This story of an uneducated dentist and his miserly wife was filled with naturalistic touches and was perceived as grim, even sordid, by most critics and audiences (**7.21**). The excised footage was apparently destroyed, and *Greed* remains one of the great mutilated films.

Von Stroheim achieved brief success at MGM by filling *The Merry Widow* (1925) with sexual subject matter. He then moved to Paramount to make *The Wedding March* (1928), yet another film in which he starred as a seducer, this time nearly redeemed by love. Again von Stroheim contemplated a lengthy film that he hoped to release as two features; the studio reduced it to one, which did poor business. Von Stroheim's last major Hollywood project, an independent production for Gloria Swanson, was *Queen Kelly* (1928–1929), which was unfinished and only much later restored and shown. Von Stroheim ceased to direct in the sound era, but he acted in many important films, including Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion* (1937).

New Investment and Blockbusters

During the mid-1920s, Wall Street investment allowed the Hollywood studios to produce even more big-budget films. Epic films followed the trend typified by *The Ten Commandments*, with colossal sets and lavish costume design. The newly formed MGM was particularly committed to prestige pictures. It undertook one of the decade's most ambitious projects, an adaptation of General Lew Wallace's bestselling novel *Ben-Hur*. The production had originated in 1922 at the Goldwyn company, and the planners tried to give the film authenticity by filming on location in Italy—where, incidentally, labor costs were lower. Shooting in Italy, however, lacked the efficiency of studio work, and one accident during the filming of a naval battle may have caused the deaths of some extras. In 1924, MGM inherited the project when it absorbed Goldwyn. The process of completing the film was long and troubled. *Ben-Hur* finally appeared in 1926. Its chariot race was filmed in huge sets; a battery of cameras covered the action from many angles, permitting a breakneck pace in the editing (**7.22**).

MGM also made an important pacifist war film, *The Big Parade* (1925). Its director, King Vidor, had learned his craft by studying the emerging Hollywood style in his hometown theater in Texas. He began his career by acting in and directing minor films in the 1910s. Moving to MGM when it formed in 1924, he worked in several genres. His *Wine of Youth* (1924) was a subtle story of three generations of women: a wise grandmother looks on helplessly as her daughter nearly divorces, and her granddaughter takes this as a cue that she can settle for love outside marriage.

The Big Parade was a much more ambitious project. It starred John Gilbert, the main romantic idol of the period after Valentino's death, as a rich young man who volunteers during World War I. The early portion of the story depicts his time behind the lines, as he falls in love

Ben-Hur

7.22 Large sets and trick photography recreated Rome's Circus Maximus for the chariot race in *Ben-Hur*.

The Big Parade

7.24 The "big parade" of men and equipment moving up to the front (*The Big Parade*).

The Big Parade

7.23 The hero and heroine's romantic interlude ends as they are wrenched apart when he must leave for the front in *The Big Parade*.

with a French farm woman (**7.23**). An abrupt switch moves the film into sweeping combat scenes (**7.24**). But, even more than *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *The Big Parade* depicts the horrors of war (**Video 7.1**). Now German soldiers are seen simply as other human victims of the combat. Alone in a foxhole with a dying German boy, the hero finds himself unable to kill the lad and instead lights him a cigarette. Other war films of the late 1920s and the 1930s portrayed war as grim and unglorious. *The Big Parade* became the first film to run more than a year on Broadway, and its success abroad was enormous. Vidor made a very different sort of film with *The Crowd* (1928). A working-class woman marries a clerk, but they nearly break up when one of their children dies in a traffic accident. *The Crowd* stood apart from most Hollywood films in its nonglamorous depiction of everyday life.

Other studios carried on the trend toward big-budget films. In 1927, Paramount released *Wings* (William Wellman), another bittersweet tale of World War I, centering on two friends, Jack and David, who love the same girl and become pilots together. Jack fails to realize that his neighbor, Mary, is in love with him, and she follows him to France as a Red Cross driver. Mary was played by Clara Bow, who enjoyed a brief but intense period of stardom from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. She epitomized the Jazz Age flapper, with bouncy, uninhibited sexuality; her most famous film, *It* (1927, Clarence Badger), earned her the name the "It girl" ("It" being a current euphemism for sex appeal).

Wings, like *The Big Parade*, combined its romantic elements with spectacular battle footage. Portable cameras were mounted on airplanes to capture aerial combats with an immediacy that trick photography could not equal (**7.25**). Its careful use of motifs and sophisticated use of continuity editing, three-point lighting, and camera movement made *Wings* the epitome of late silent filmmaking in Hollywood. When the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was formed in 1927 and began giving out annual awards (later dubbed "Oscars"), *Wings* was the first winner as best picture.

Genres and Directors

After UA was started in 1919, Douglas Fairbanks was the first of its founders to release a film through the new company. *His Majesty, the American* (1919, Joseph Henabery) was one of the unpretentious, clever comedies that made Fairbanks a star. Soon, however, he moved from comedy to a more ambitious costume

Wings

7.25 In *Wings*, the death of a German pilot and the attacking American plane in the background were filmed in the air without trick photography.

picture, *The Mark of Zorro* (1920, Fred Niblo). It retained the star's comic flair but was longer and emphasized historical atmosphere, a conventional romance, dueling, and other dangerous stunts (**7.26**). *The Mark of Zorro* was so successful that Fairbanks gave up comedy and concentrated on swashbucklers such as *The Three Musketeers* (1921, Fred Niblo), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924, Raoul Walsh), and *The Black Pirate* (1926, Albert Parker). Fairbanks was one of the most consistently popular stars of the 1920s, though his success dissipated in the early sound era.

The Mark of Zorro

7.26 Douglas Fairbanks, as Zorro, soars over a host of pursuers in *The Mark of Zorro*.

Fairbanks had been unusual as a silent comedian who worked exclusively in features from the beginning of his film career in 1915. In the 1920s, however, several of the great slapstick stars of the earlier period also began making longer films (see 1920s Comedy in Hollywood).

1920s COMEDY IN HOLLYWOOD

During the 1910s, most comedies that were based on physical action, or slapstick, were shorts that accompanied more prestigious features (though the popular comic stars often proved bigger draws). During the 1920s, feature-length slapstick comedies became more common. Stars such as Charles Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, and Buster Keaton concentrated on creating stronger stories that would support their elaborate physical gags. With their mastery of purely visual action, these comedians developed one of the most prominent and enduring genres of the decade.

Charles Chaplin continued to make hugely successful films in the early 1920s, when his contract with First National kept him from releasing through UA. In 1914, Chaplin had appeared in the first slapstick feature, *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, but he concentrated on shorts. In 1921, he returned to features with extraordinary success in *The Kid*. Here Chaplin played the familiar Little Tramp but shared the spotlight with the expressive child actor Jackie Coogan, who appeared as a foundling whom the Tramp raises (**7.27**).

The Kid

7.27 In *The Kid*, the Little Tramp coaches the foundling on tactics of street fighting, unaware that the rival's muscular father is looking on.

Chaplin soon became even more ambitious, making a drama, *A Woman of Paris*, in which he played only a walk-on role. This bitterly ironic romance satirized high society. Its droll, even risqué, humor (**7.28**) influenced other directors of

A Woman of Paris

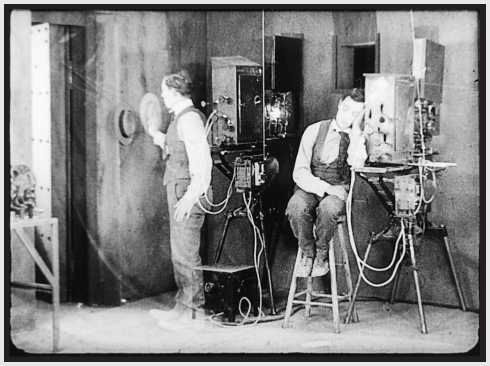
7.28 The heroine's rich lover fetches one of his own handkerchiefs from a drawer in her apartment, a touch that establishes their intimate relationship visually, in *A Woman of Paris*.

Safety Last

7.29 In *Safety Last*, Harold Lloyd created one of the most memorable comic images of the cinema when he dangled from a clock above the street.

Cops

7.30 Trapped on a horse-drawn moving van in a passing police parade, the hero calmly lights his cigarette with a bomb tossed by an anarchist in *Cops* (1922, codirected by Keaton and Eddie Cline).



Sherlock Jr

7.31 The hero of *Sherlock Jr.*, a projectionist, sleeps while his superimposed dream image goes out to enter the film being shown in the theater.

sophisticated comedies. The public, however, stayed away from a Chaplin film without the Little Tramp. Chaplin brought back that beloved character in two very popular features, *The Gold Rush* (1925; **Video 7.2**) and *The Circus* (1927).

Harold Lloyd quickly joined the vogue for slapstick features. Using the "glasses" character he had developed in the late teens, he made *A Sailor-Made Man* (1921, Fred Newmeyer), the story of a brash young man who wins his love through a series of adventures. Although Lloyd starred in various types of comedies, he is best remembered for his "thrill" pictures. In *Safety Last!* (1923, Newmeyer and Sam Taylor), he played an ambitious young man who has to climb the side of a skyscraper as a publicity stunt for the store where he works (**7.29**). Some of Lloyd's films of this era featured him as the bumbling small-town boy who becomes a hero when confronted with a great challenge, as in *Girl Shy* (1924, Newmeyer and Taylor), *The Freshman* (1925, Newmeyer and Taylor), and *The Kid Brother* (1927, Ted Wilde; **Video 7.2**). Lloyd's career lasted into the early sound era, but eventually the aging actor did not fit his youthful image, and he retired.

Buster Keaton's show-business career began when as a child he joined his parents' vaudeville act. He moved into films as an actor in Fatty Arbuckle's short films of the late 1910s. When Arbuckle shifted to features in the early 1920s, Keaton took over his film production unit and directed and starred in a series of popular two-reelers. His trademark was his refusal to smile, and he became known as "the Great Stone Face." Keaton's early films revealed a taste for bizarre humor that bordered at times on Surrealism (**7.30**).

Keaton soon moved into features, though his offbeat humor and complex plots made him less popular than his main rivals, Chaplin and Lloyd. His first feature-length hit was *The*

(continued)

1920s COMEDY IN HOLLYWOOD, continued

The Luck o' the Foolish

7.32 In a long take in *The Luck o' the Foolish* (1924, Harry Edwards), Harry Langdon slowly eats a sandwich, registering his dawning realization that a shingle has accidentally fallen into it.

Navigator (1924, codirected with Donald Crisp), a story of a couple cast adrift alone on a huge ocean liner. Keaton was fond of stories that exploited the cinematic medium, as in *Sherlock Jr.* (1924), which contained an elaborate film-within-a-film dream sequence (**7.31**). Keaton's finest film may be *The General* (1927, codirected by Clyde Bruckman), a story of a daring rescue during the Civil War. Keaton and Bruckman created an almost perfectly balanced plot structure, evoked period detail, and staged elaborate gags within single shots (**Video 7.2**). Nonetheless, *The General* was not a success.

In 1928, Keaton moved to MGM, where he made one film that was up to his old standard—*The Cameraman* (1928, Edward Sedgwick, Jr.). After the coming of sound, however, he was not allowed his customary freedom in improvising gags on the set. Keaton's career gradually declined in the early 1930s, when MGM began costarring him with more aggressive comics such as Jimmy Durante. From the mid-1930s, Keaton played in many minor films and took small roles, but his career never revived before his death in 1966.

Harry Langdon came to the cinema somewhat later than the other major comics of this era. From 1924 to 1927, he made short comedies for Mack Sennett. In these he developed his typical persona, one quite different from those of his rivals. Langdon cultivated a baby-faced image, playing naive characters who react slowly to whatever happens to them (**7.32**). Soon he also began making features: *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp* (1926, Harry Edwards), *The Strong Man* (1926, Frank Capra), and *Long Pants* (1927, Capra). Langdon continued to appear in small roles into the 1940s, but, as with many other comics of this era, his appeal came primarily through visual humor.

Although these major actors entered features, the comic short remained a popular part of theater programs. The most important producers of shorts remained Hal Roach, who had discovered Harold Lloyd, and Mack Sennett, formerly of Keystone. Under their guidance, a new generation of stars emerged. The most famous of these were Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, who had worked separately in minor comedies for years before being teamed by Roach in *Putting Pants on Philip* (1927). This short film about an American (Hardy) trying to deal with the turmoil caused by his flirtatious, kilt-wearing Scottish cousin (Laurel) remains one of their most hilarious (**7.33**). Unlike some other silent comedians, Laurel and Hardy made an effortless transition to sound, and Roach graduated them to feature films in 1931.

Putting Pants on Philip

7.33 *Putting Pants on Philip*: Stan Laurel as Philip gets upset at the idea of a tailor measuring him for a new pair of pants.

Fluttering Hearts

7.34 Charley hides behind a life-size female puppet that he uses to flirt with a blackmailer in *Fluttering Hearts* (1927).

Another star of this period was Charley Chase, who worked for Sennett. Chase was a slim, ordinary-looking man with a small moustache who depended not so much on his comic appearance as on his talent for staging elaborate gags and chases (**7.34**). Comics from the teens who had played supporting roles in Chaplin's and other stars' films, such as Chester Conklin and Mack Swain, now acquired series of their own under Sennett.

Another genre that gained in prestige during the 1920s was the Western. Previously, Westerns had been cheap, short features shown primarily in small-town theaters. Then, in 1923, Paramount released *The Covered Wagon* (James Cruze), an epic of the westward trip of a wagon train. With a large cast, including major stars, and a thrilling scene of the wagons crossing a river, the film was a hit. The low-budget Western continued to be a staple of Hollywood production, but for decades the large-scale Western would command respect.

John Ford had made his start directing stylish, modest Westerns (see A New Generation of Directors p. 64). *Just Pals* (1920) was an unconventional film, the story of a loafer in a small town who befriends a homeless boy and eventually becomes a hero by exposing a local embezzler (**7.3–7.11**). In 1921, he moved from Universal to the Fox Film Corporation. His first major success there was *The Iron Horse* (1924), a high-budget Western made in the wake of *The Covered Wagon*. This story of the building of the first transcontinental railroad exploited Ford's feeling for landscape (**7.35**). He soon became Fox's top director, working in a variety of genres. Ford's other Western at Fox was *3 Bad Men* (1926), with an impressive land-rush sequence. Surprisingly, he did not return to the genre until *Stagecoach* (1939), but he was identified with Westerns throughout his long and distinguished career.

Frank Borzage had also directed a number of low-budget Westerns during the 1910s. These include *The Gun Woman* (1918), the story of a rugged dance-hall owner who shoots the man she loves when he turns out to be a stagecoach bandit. Like Ford, Borzage moved into more prestigious filmmaking at the larger studios during the 1920s, though he quickly abandoned Westerns. Today he is often thought of in connection with melodramas, such as *Humoresque* (1920), a sentimental account of a Jewish violinist wounded in World War I. Some of Borzage's best films of the decade, however, were in other genres. *The Circle* (1925, MGM) was a sophisticated romantic comedy. In 1924, Borzage moved to Fox, where he joined Ford as a leading director. His first film there, *Lazybones* (1925), was a rambling, low-key comedy about a lazy young man who—unlike most Hollywood protagonists—has no goals but sacrifices his already shaky reputation to raise a child for the sister of the woman he loves.

After *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was shown in the United States in 1921, horror films gradually became a minor American genre. Universal pioneered this type of film, primarily because one of its main stars was Lon Chaney. Chaney was a master of makeup—"the Man of a Thousand Faces"—and had a flair for macabre roles. He played Quasimodo in the original adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923, Wallace Worsley), for which Universal built extravagant sets recreating medieval Paris, and the Phantom in the 1925 version of *The Phantom of the Opera* (Rupert Julian). Chaney's most consistently disturbing films, however, were made at MGM with director Tod Browning, whose taste for stories with perverse twists matched his own. In *The Unknown* (1927), for example, Chaney played a circus knife thrower, Alonzo, who pretends to be armless as part of his act. His beautiful partner (played by the young Joan Crawford) has a pathological fear of being touched by men and trusts only Alonzo. To gain her lasting love, he actually has his arms amputated, only to discover that she has now fallen in love with another man (**7.36**). Chaney died prematurely in 1930, but Browning went on in the 1930s to make some notable horror films, such as *Dracula* (1931) and *Freaks* (1932). The horror film also received a boost in the late 1920s, when more German directors began moving to Hollywood.

The gangster genre had not been particularly important in American filmmaking before the mid-1920s. There had been some films about petty urban crime, such as Griffith's

The Iron Horse

7.35 A dynamic composition in depth against distant mountains as Indians ambush a supply train in John Ford's *The Iron Horse*.

The Unknown

7.36 Lon Chaney as the protagonist of *The Unknown* sits with his feet, instead of his hands, on the table.

The Musketeers of Pig Alley (1912) and Walsh's *Regeneration* (1915). The rise of organized crime associated with Prohibition, however, helped make the flashily dressed, heavily armed gangster a prominent image in Hollywood films. One film did a great deal to establish the genre: Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld* (1927), made for Paramount.

Von Sternberg had started by independently producing and directing a gloomy naturalistic drama, *The Salvation Hunters* (1925), on a shoestring budget. It was praised by Charles Chaplin, but it failed at the box office. Von Sternberg codirected a few features without being credited. In 1927 he had his breakthrough film with *Underworld*. It was a big hit, in part due to its offbeat stars. Its odd hero is a homely, lumbering jewel thief, played by George Bancroft. He picks up a drunken Britisher (Clive Brook) and makes him into a refined assistant. The hero's world-weary mistress (Evelyn Brent) falls in love with the Britisher. Von Sternberg filmed this story with the dense, dazzling cinematography that was to become his hallmark (**7.37**; **Video 7.3**).

Von Sternberg went on to make another quirky gangster film starring Bancroft, an early talkie called *Thunderbolt* (1929). He also worked in other genres. *The Docks of New York* (1928) was a sordid story of a ship's stoker (Bancroft again) and a prostitute redeemed by each other's love; again the crowded scenery and textured, atmospheric lighting set von Sternberg's work apart. *The Docks of New York* prefigured the romantic melodramas that were to be the director's specialty in the 1930s.

Another unconventional director of this period was William C. de Mille, who has been overshadowed by his brother Cecil B. (the two spelled their family names differently). A former playwright, William made several distinctive films during the decade after World War I, mostly centering on gentle idiosyncratic characters. In *Conrad in Quest of His Youth* (1920), for example, a British soldier returns from India to find himself without any aim in life. In an amusing scene, he reunites his cousins in an attempt to recreate exactly their childhood existence. *Miss Lulu Bett* (1921) deals with a plain spinster forced into a subservient position to earn her keep with her sister's family. Jolted out of her unquestioning acceptance by a false marriage to a bigamist, she rebels (**7.38**).

One isolated, but noteworthy, talent of the period was Karl Brown, a cinematographer who had worked with Griffith in the 1920s. For Paramount he directed *Stark Love* (1927), a film outstanding for its realism. *Stark Love* was a rural drama, filmed entirely on location in North Carolina with nonactors. It went against gender stereotypes of the period, telling the story of a backwoods culture in which women are utterly oppressed. A young man receives a scholarship but gives it up to send a neighbor girl to college in his place (**7.39**). After *Stark Love*, Brown returned to cinematography.

Unconventional films were not ruled out in Hollywood, but they had to make money. The American production companies also proved their willingness to experiment by importing many successful foreign filmmakers.

Foreign Filmmakers in Hollywood

Before 1920, a few directors from abroad came to work in the American industry, mostly from France. Éclair's Maurice Tourneur made the move in 1914, Pathé's Albert Capellani in 1915, and Gaumont's Léonce Perret in 1917. But as important filmmaking trends emerged in Europe, studio executives realized that these countries could be a source of fresh talent. Moreover, hiring the best personnel was a way of ensuring that no country would grow powerful enough to challenge Hollywood in world film markets.

Underworld

7.37 Backlight and smoke create an atmospheric moment as the protagonist of *Underworld* guns down a rival.

Miss Lulu Bett

7.38 In *Miss Lulu Bett*, Lulu's brother-in-law complains about her buying a small plant out of her meager earnings.

Stark Love

7.39 Location photography in a scene where the hero of *Stark Love* teaches the heroine to read.

Rosita

7.40 The large sets and deep stagings of *Rosita* made it more a Lubitsch film than a Mary Pickford star vehicle.

American firms also bought the rights to European plays and literary works and in some cases brought their authors to work as scriptwriters in the United States. A Paramount advertisement boasted

> Every form of printed or spoken drama that might be suitable for Paramount Pictures is examined. Everything useful published in Italian, Spanish, German or French is steadily translated. Synopses are made of every stage play produced in America, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, London and Rome.[1]

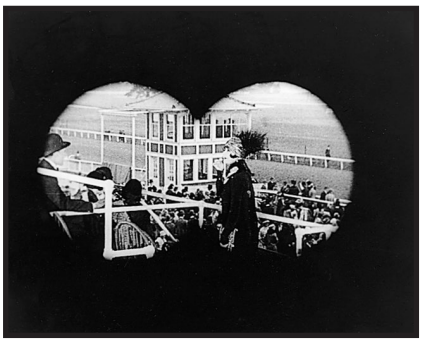
Studio representatives visited Europe and viewed the latest films, looking for promising stars and filmmakers. Harry Warner saw two of Hungarian director Mihály Kertész's early films and wired him an offer that led to his lengthy career at Warner Bros. under the name Michael Curtiz. Because Germany had the most prominent foreign film industry, the largest number of émigré filmmakers came from that country.

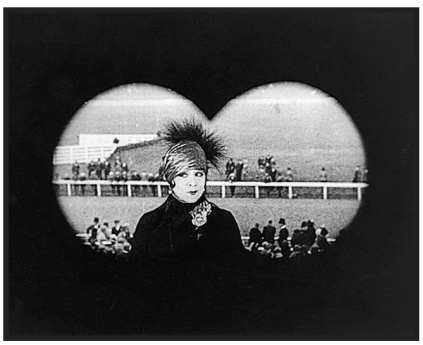
Lubitsch Comes to Hollywood The regular flow of European talent to Hollywood began after Ernst Lubitsch's *Madame DuBarry* was released in the United States (as *Passion*, see Spectacles p. 86.) to great success. Star Pola Negri was soon acquired by Paramount. Lubitsch followed her to Hollywood in 1923. Already the most successful director in Germany, Lubitsch quickly adapted his style to incorporate the classical approach. Mary Pickford asked him to direct her in her 1923 production, *Rosita*. Although it allowed Pickford many amusing scenes, the film had the grandiose manner of Lubitsch's German pictures (**7.40**).

Despite *Rosita*'s success, UA was in financial difficulties and could not fund further Lubitsch productions. Surprisingly, he moved to Warner Bros. and became the minor studio's most prestigious director. Inspired by Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris*, he made a series of sophisticated society comedies that hinted at sexual appetites and rivalries bubbling behind polite veneers. This suggestiveness and Lubitsch's clever visual jokes became known as "the Lubitsch touch." He mastered continuity editing and could indicate characters' attitudes simply by how they shifted position in the frame or through the directions of their glances from shot to shot (**7.41–7.44**). Lubitsch's main films for Warner Bros. were *The Marriage Circle* (1924; see **7.2**), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1925), and *So This Is Paris* (1926). He also returned to his old genre, the historical film, with *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927) at MGM and *The Patriot* at Paramount (1928). He later proved to be one of the most imaginative directors of the early sound era.

The Scandinavians Come to America Hollywood, and specifically MGM, also picked up on the important Scandinavian directors of the 1910s and early 1920s. Benjamin Christensen's first American film was *The Devil's Circus* (1926; **7.45**), which recalled the circus genre common in 1910s Danish films (see Denmark: Nordisk and Ole Oleson p. 25). Christensen went on to make several gothic thrillers, most notably *Seven Footprints to Satan* (1929) before returning to Denmark.

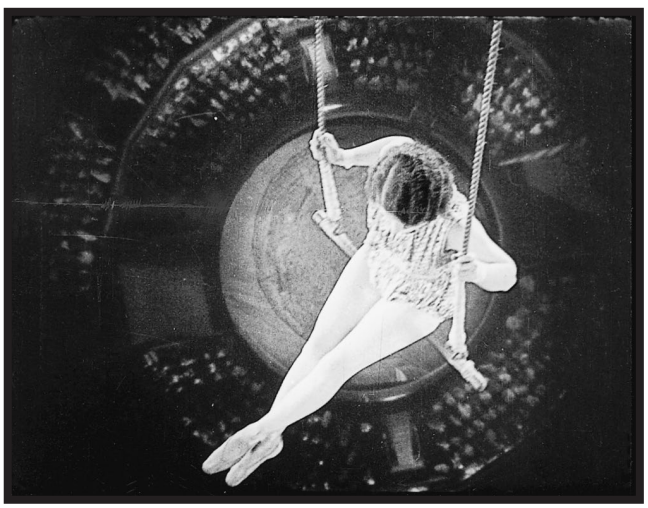
Mauritz Stiller was hired by MGM after the success of *The Story of Gösta Berling* in Berlin (see Sweden p. 53). With him went Greta Garbo, whom Stiller had discovered. MGM set the pair to work on *The Torrent*, but Stiller's eccentricities and inability to conform to strict accounting methods soon led to his replacement. German producer Erich Pommer, then working in a brief stint at Paramount, hired him to make *Hotel Imperial*, starring Pola Negri. This was Stiller's most notable Hollywood production,





Lady Windermere's Fan

7.41–7.44 Four shots from the racetrack scene of *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1925), during which the views of various characters through binoculars reveal their attitudes toward a woman of shady reputation.



The Devil's Circus

7.45 This trapeze scene in *The Devil's Circus* exemplifies the kinds of "European" special effects and daring camera angles the Hollywood cinema was beginning to adopt in the mid-1920s.

including some "Germanic" camera movements that involved placing the camera on an elaborate elevator system. It did not recapture the wit or intensity of his Swedish films, however, and after a few more aborted projects, Stiller returned to Sweden, where he died in 1928.

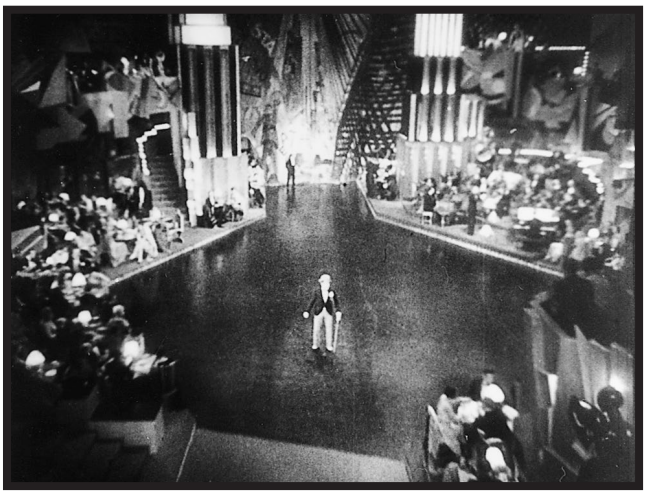
In 1923, Victor Sjöström also accepted an offer from MGM, which renamed him Victor Seastrom. His first American film, *Name the Man*, was a bit stiff but contained several shots that displayed feeling for natural environments. *He Who Gets Slapped* (1924) was a vehicle for Lon Chaney; another Scandinavian-influenced circus film, it proved highly popular. Seastrom then made two films starring Lillian Gish, who had recently come to MGM after her long association with Griffith. She wanted Seastrom to direct an adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter*. He seemed perfectly suited to Nathaniel Hawthorne's tale of love and retribution. His sense of landscape emerged even more strongly here (**7.46**). Similarly, the performances of Gish and Swedish actor Lars Hansen were strong, but MGM insisted on a comic subplot that vitiated the austere drama.

Gish and Hansen starred again in Seastrom's final American film, *The Wind* (1928). The story involves a woman who moves to the desolate, windswept Western frontier to marry a naive rancher. She kills and buries a would-be rapist but then is driven to the brink of madness by visions of the wind uncovering his body. Despite a hopeful ending imposed by the studio, *The Wind* was a powerful, bleak film. Its grimness and its release as a silent film when sound was coming in doomed it to failure, however, and Seastrom returned to Sweden, to his original name, and to a long career acting in sound films.

European Directors at Universal Universal, one of the larger studios among the Little Five, lent prestige to its output by hiring several European directors. Among these was Paul Fejos, a Hungarian who had made his mark in Hollywood by directing an experimental independent feature, *The Last Moment* (1927). It consisted primarily of a drowning man's final vision, portrayed in a lengthy, rapidly edited passage almost certainly influenced by the French Impressionist style. *Lonesome* (1928) was a simple

The Scarlet Letter

7.46 The Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale walks through a forest of stumps in *The Scarlet Letter*.



Broadway

7.47 In *Broadway*, the camera pulls far back from the hero during a musical number in the Expressionistic nightclub.

story of a working-class couple's romance, portrayed with a naturalism that was unusual for Hollywood. His next film, the elaborate early musical *Broadway* (1929), used a huge Expressionist-style nightclub set through which the camera swooped on a giant crane built for this production (**7.47**). After a few minor Hollywood projects, including the foreign-language versions of some early talkies, Fejos returned to work in various European countries in the 1930s.

Universal also hired Paul Leni, director of one of the main German Expressionist films, *Waxworks*. Leni's dark, vaguely expressionist adaptation of the hit Broadway gothic thriller *The Cat and the Canary* (1927) became an enormous success. *The Man Who Laughs* (1928) was a big-budget historical epic with overtones of the horror genre. It starred German actor Conrad Veidt in an Expressionist performance as a man whose mouth has been cut into a permanent grotesque grin. These two films reinforced Universal's orientation toward horror films—a tendency that had begun with *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Phantom of the Opera* and which was to intensify in the sound era with such films as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. Leni's death in 1929, however, meant that others would take over the exploration of the genre.

Murnau and His Influence at Fox Aside from Lubitsch, F. W. Murnau was the most prestigious European director to come to Hollywood in the 1920s. Fox hired him in 1925, in the wake of the critical acclaim for *The Last Laugh* (see **5.22–5.23**). Fox allowed him an enormous budget to make its biggest picture of 1927, *Sunrise*. Scripted by Carl Mayer, who had written many German Expressionist and Kammerspiel films, and designed by Rochus Gliese, who had worked with Murnau in Germany, the film was virtually a German film made in America. It was a simple but intense psychological drama of a farmer who plans to murder his wife in order to run away with his lover from the city. The film was full of Germanic mise-en-scène with Expressionist touches (**7.48**). Even the American stars, Janet Gaynor and George O'Brien, were induced to give Expressionist-style performances.

Sunrise was perhaps too sophisticated to be really popular. Its huge city sets (**7.49**) made it so costly that it did only moderately well for Fox. As a result, Murnau's fortunes declined. He went on to increasingly modest projects: *Four Devils* (1929), yet another circus film, now lost; and *City Girl* (1930), a part-talkie that was taken out of Murnau's control and altered. His last film began as a collaboration with documentarist Robert Flaherty (see Documentary Features Gain Prominence). They worked on a fiction film about Tahiti, *Tabu* (1931). After Flaherty abandoned the project, Murnau completed this flawed but beautiful love story made on location in the South Seas. He died in a car accident shortly before *Tabu*'s release.

Despite Murnau's lack of popular success during his Hollywood career, *Sunrise* had an enormous impact on American filmmakers, especially at Fox. John Ford's sentimental World War I drama *Four Sons* (1928) looks very much like a German film, and signs of Ufa's studio-bound style were to crop up in his sound films, such as *The Informer* (1935) and *The Fugitive* (1947).

Frank Borzage's Fox films show even more directly the influence of Murnau's work. Borzage's *7th Heaven* is an affecting melodrama about a forlorn Parisian prostitute, Diane, and a woman-hating sewer cleaner, Chico, who gradually gain each other's love only to be separated by World War I. None of the film crew was European, but the set designs by Harry Oliver incorporated the sorts of false-perspective backgrounds that Murnau had used in *Sunrise* and some of his German films (**7.50**). German-style virtuoso camera movements were imitated, most spectacularly in a vertical shot made from an elevator (**7.51**).

Sunrise

7.48 Deep space and skewed false perspectives create an Expressionist composition in *Sunrise*.

Sunrise

7.49 The huge city square constructed for *Sunrise* (with help from German false-perspective techniques that made it seem even larger).

Borzage followed up the tremendous success of *7th Heaven* with a similar film, *Street Angel* (1928), starring the same actors, Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell. They became the ideal romantic couple of the late 1920s. She won the first Best Actress award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for these two films and *Sunrise* (at a time when an actor's entire year's output could be nominated). They starred together again in Borzage's film *Lucky Star* (1929), a dark, romantic love story that again displayed German influence and remained one of the rare Hollywood films with a wheelchair-bound hero.

European films, and especially those from Germany, also affected Hollywood filmmaking more generally. *Flesh and the Devil* (1926), directed by the well-established filmmaker Clarence Brown, was full of elaborate camera movement, subjective effects, and other techniques derived from European avant-garde cinema (**7.52**). It also starred the most successful of the imported European stars, Greta Garbo, teamed with matinee idol John Gilbert (**7.53**). Like *Flesh and the Devil*, many Hollywood films of the late 1920s and the 1930s reflected influences from

7th Heaven

7.50 Diane and her sister in their garret apartment in *7th Heaven*. The upwardly slanting floor shows the influence of German set design.

7th Heaven

7.51 In *7th Heaven*, an elevator allows the camera to move with Diane and Chico seven flights up as they approach his apartment, which their love transforms into "heaven."

European films, particularly those of the French Impressionist, German Expressionist, and Soviet Montage movements.

FILMS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN AUDIENCES

In Chapters 4 through 6, we saw how alternatives to classical Hollywood cinema arose in the form of stylistic movements. Other alternatives to mainstream Hollywood fare also appeared. In the United States, such alternatives have usually been specialty films aimed at specific audiences. During the silent era, a small circuit of theaters for African American audiences developed, along with a number of regional producers making films with all-black casts.

7.52 The duel scene in *Flesh and the Devil*, handled with a rapid tracking movement back from a silhouetted scene. The opponents end offscreen at either side, with puffs of smoke coming into the frame, briefly leaving the result uncertain.

7.53 In *Flesh and the Devil*, a tiny spotlight created a romantic moment as John Gilbert lights a cigarette for Greta Garbo; the pair were cast as lovers in several more films.

In 1915, the release of Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* led to many protests and boycotts on the part of African Americans. Some envisioned the creation of black-controlled production firms that could provide an alternative perspective on race relations. A few sporadic attempts at production were initiated during the latter half of the 1910s, but the results were usually short films that were relegated to a minor role on programs. They either showed positive images of black heroism during World War I or perpetuated traditional black comic stereotypes.

During the 1920s, black roles in mainstream Hollywood films were minor and still based on stereotypes. African Americans usually appeared as servants, wastrels, comic children, and the like. Black actors seldom found regular work and had to fill in with other jobs, usually menial, to survive.

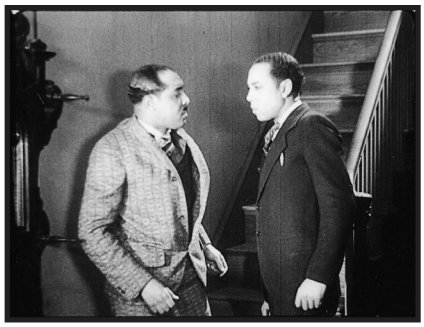
As moviegoers, African Americans had little choice but to attend theaters that showed films designed for white audiences. Most theaters in the United States were segregated. In the South, laws required that exhibitors separate their white and black patrons. In the North, despite civil-rights statutes in many localities, the practice was for the races to sit in different parts of auditoriums. Some theaters, usually owned by whites, were in black neighborhoods and catered to local viewers. In such theaters, any films with black-oriented subject matter proved popular.

There were even a small number of films produced specifically for African American audiences. These used all-black casts, even though the directors and other filmmakers were usually white. The most prominent company of this kind in the 1920s was the Colored Players, which made several films, including two particularly significant ones. *The Scar of Shame* (1927, Frank Perugini) dealt with the effects of environment and upbringing on black people's aspirations. The hero, a struggling composer, strives to live a respectable middle-class existence; he is "a credit to his race," despite the attempts of sordid characters to corrupt him (**7.54**).

The Colored Players also made a less preachy film that has survived, *Ten Nights in a Barroom* (1926, Charles S. Gilpin), an adaptation of a classic stage melodrama that had traditionally been played by white casts. Its complex flashback structure tells the story of a drunkard who reforms when he accidentally contributes to the death of his daughter in a barroom brawl (**7.55**). Despite its low budget, *Ten Nights in a Barroom* was skillfully lit and edited in the classical style.

In rare cases, black filmmakers were able to work behind the camera. Oscar Micheaux was for several decades the most successful African American producer-director. He began as a homesteader in South Dakota, where he wrote novels and sold them door to door to his white neighbors. He used the same method to sell stock to adapt his writings into films, creating the Micheaux Book and Film Company in 1918. Over the next decade, he made thirty films, concentrating on such topics as lynching, the Ku Klux Klan, and interracial marriage.

The energetic and determined Micheaux worked quickly with low budgets, and his films have a rough, disjunctive style that boldly depicts black concerns on the screen. *Body and Soul* (1925) explores the issue of the religious exploitation of poor blacks. Paul Robeson, one of the most successful black actors and singers of the century, plays a false preacher who extorts money and seduces women (**7.56**; **Video 7.4**). Micheaux went bankrupt in the late 1920s and had to resort to white financing in the sound era. Nevertheless, he continued to average a film a year up to 1940 and made one more in 1948. Although much of his work is lost, Micheaux demonstrated that a black director could make films for black audiences.


Scar of Shame

Ten Nights in a Barroom

7.54, *left* The conservatively dressed hero of *Scar of Shame* confronts the villainous gambler, marked by his sporty checked suit.

7.55, *right* The hero of *Ten Nights in a Barroom* holds his fatally wounded daughter.

The opportunities for African Americans would improve somewhat during the sound era. Talented black entertainers were in greater demand in musicals, and major studios experimented with all-black casts. As we shall see in Chapter 9, one of the most important early sound films, King Vidor's *Hallelujah!*, attempted to explore African American culture (see **9.9–9.10**).

Body and Soul

7.56 Paul Robeson as the villain in *Body and Soul*.

THE ANIMATED PART OF THE PROGRAM

The basic techniques of animated films had been invented during the 1910s (see The Beginnings of Film Animation p. 31), and the post–World War I period saw a boom in animation. New independent animation studios appeared, creating greater output and applying a division of labor that made the process of animation more efficient. Typically, head animators laid out the basic poses for the scene and the "in-betweeners" filled in the movements with additional drawings. Other workers traced the drawings onto cels, still others filled in with paint, and a cinematographer photographed the images frame by frame. The result could be a series of cartoons released monthly or even biweekly.

Most animation companies produced series with continuing characters or themes. These films would be released through an independent distributor, but that distributor might sign a contract with one of the big Hollywood firms to put the cartoons on its own program. The most successful independent distributor of this era was Margaret J. Winkler Mintz. By the early 1920s, she was financing and releasing the decade's three most popular series: the Fleischer brothers' "Out of the Inkwell" films, the cartoons based on Bud Fisher's beloved "Mutt and Jeff" comics, and some of Walt Disney's earliest efforts.

The Fleischer brothers, Max and Dave, had experimented with a new film technique called *rotoscoping*. The rotoscope allowed a filmmaker to take live-action films, project each frame onto a piece of paper, and trace the outlines of its figures. Although the rotoscope was patented in 1915, World War I delayed further development of it. After the war, the brothers returned to the device, using it to animate cartoon figures. They used a live-action prologue for each film in their series, featuring Max Fleischer as a cartoonist who creates Koko, a clown who pops "out of the inkwell." The first cartoon was released in late 1919, and several others followed sporadically through 1920.

Rotoscoping was not intended to increase efficiency, as earlier inventions in cartooning were. Instead, by tracing the action one image at a time on cels, the cartoonist could easily produce characters that moved naturally *as whole figures*, rather than stiffly, moving only one or a few parts of their bodies, as in the slash and other simple cel systems (see Streamlining American Animation p. 66). The Fleischers' new character, Koko the Clown, swung his limbs through space freely, and his loose outfit swirled about him as he went (**7.57**).

The Fleischers also employed the standard techniques of cels, slashing, and retracing, but rotoscoping gave these devices new freedom. The "Out of the Inkwell" series prospered during the 1920s. In the early sound era, however, the Fleischers replaced Koko with the equally popular Betty Boop and Popeye.

The "Mutt and Jeff" series had begun as a comic strip in 1911. Its hapless stars were two moustached fellows, one tall, one short. The strip's artist, Bud Fisher, agreed in

1916 to allow his characters to be animated. His name was invariably given as the creator of the cartoon series, even though over the years animation veterans actually drew the cartoons. Distributor Mintz contracted the series for release through Fox, and it remained popular through the 1920s (**7.58**).

The young Walt Disney and his friend Ub Iwerks started their own commercial-arts firm in Kansas City in 1919. Failing to make money, they then worked for an ad agency, creating simple animated films. There they started "Newman's Laugh-O-Grams," a series of short animated films for local exhibition. After this venture also failed, Disney moved to Hollywood. In 1923, he received backing from Mintz to create a series of "Alice Comedies," which proved to be his first success. With his brother Roy, he formed the Disney Brothers Studios, which would eventually grow into one of the world's biggest entertainment conglomerates.

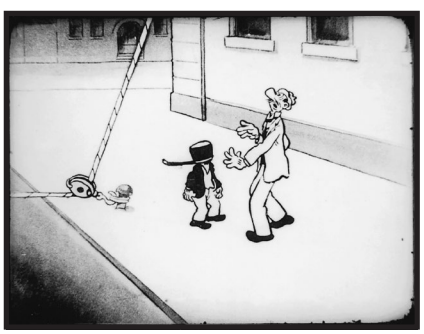
During the 1920s, the staff of the firm included several of the major animators who would create series for Warner Bros. and MGM in the 1930s: Hugh Harman, Rudolf Ising, and Isadore "Friz" Freleng. They all worked on the Alice series, which combined live action and cartoon images (**7.59**). In 1927, the Disney studio switched to full animation with the "Oswald the Rabbit" series. In a legal battle, however, Charles Mintz, husband of Disney's distributor, seized control of the character. Walt's solution was to invent a new character called Mickey Mouse. The first two Mickey cartoons failed to find a distributor. A third, *Steamboat Willie*, incorporated the new sound technology and proved a huge hit. It helped catapult Disney to the head of the animation business in the 1930s.

Other series of this period proved highly popular. Paul Terry, who had worked at various animation studios during the 1910s, started his own firm, Fables Pictures Inc., in 1921. He launched a series called "Aesop's Fables." For these modern retellings of the classic tales Terry used a virtual assembly-line division of labor to turn out one film per week; the results were amusing but usually conventional (**7.60**). Terry left the company in 1928 to create Terrytoons, a firm he ran until 1955, when he sold it to television producers.

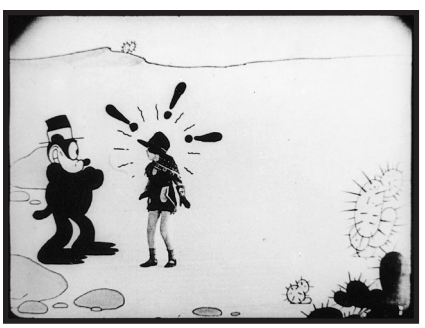
The most popular series of the 1920s starred Felix the Cat. Its nominal creator, Pat Sullivan, had opened his own studio in 1915, making ads and animated films. He began making Felix cartoons for Paramount around 1918. Although Sullivan signed all the films, the head of animation was actually Otto Messmer, who originated the character of Felix and handled the animation process. Mintz signed to distribute the series in 1922. The films were hugely successful, partly through the appeal of the feline hero and partly through the flexible animation style. In these films, Felix's tail could fly off his body and become a question mark or a cane for him to lean on (**7.61**). By the mid-1920s, the films had achieved a huge audience. Sullivan was also a pioneer in the use of tie-in products like dolls to further exploit the success of his cartoon character. Like most of the major animated series of the 1920s, Felix did not carry over well into the sound era.

The US film industry's push into foreign markets during World War I gave it an enormous economic base for its expansion and consolidation in the 1920s. Most national film industries were too small to offer significant resistance to American domination. Yet the cinema continued to be an international phenomenon, and many countries managed to make at least a few films of their own. Some European countries were strong enough to support national industries and even to consider banding

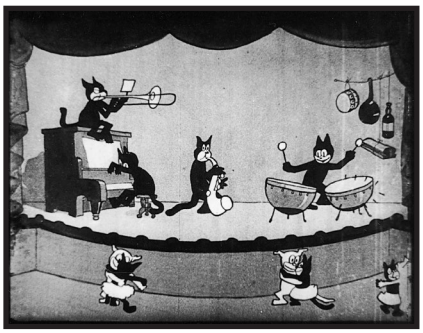
7.57 In *The Clown's Little Brother* (1920), Koko struts across the frame in a rotoscoped motion that seemed effortless and lively in the context of 1910s animation.



7.58 Mutt's attempts to help Jeff get out of the pot attached to his head soon leads to dizzy escapades on a half-built skyscraper in *Where Am I?* (1925).



7.59 In *Alice in the Wooly West* (1926), animated exclamation points express the live-action heroine's astonishment as she confronts the world of cartoon characters.



7.60 The nightclub in which the protagonist fritters away his paycheck in *The Spendthrift* (1922), with the moral "A spendthrift blames everybody but himself for his misfortune."

7.61 Felix politely tips his ears in *Felix the Cat in Futuritzy* (1928).

together to challenge American power. Moreover, for the first time, filmmakers in several countries were creating short experimental films that challenged the classical narrative approach of Hollywood cinema.

REFERENCE

1. Advertisement, Paramount Pictures, *Photoplay* 19, no. 4 (March 1921): 4.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On Ford in the 1920s: "Everybody's Irish"

On Von Sternberg's three final silents: "Never too late silents"

On Harold Lloyd: "The Boy's Life: Harold Lloyd's *Girl Shy* on the Criterion Channel"

On *Rosita*: "Venice 2017: Lubitsch and Pickford, Finally Together Again"

See also the series, "The Ten Best Films of..."

Ghosts Before Breakfast

CHAPTER 8

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS OF THE 1920s

The Passion of Joan of Arc

As we saw in Chapters 4 to 6, major alternatives to the classical filmmaking style of Hollywood arose in the years after World War I: French Impressionism, German Expressionism, and Soviet Montage. These three movements occurred as part of a general reaction against the domination of international markets by Hollywood films. Some European companies united to resist American encroachment. At the same time, artists in other media and dedicated filmmakers worked outside the commercial establishment to create alternative types of cinema, both experimental and documentary. Less dramatically, several countries tried to compete with the United States by producing films more regularly.

"FILM EUROPE"

Directly after World War I, nations competed against each other as well as against Hollywood, hoping to prosper in the international film market. The German government fostered the growth of its film industry by continuing the wartime ban on imported films. In France, despite many efforts, adverse conditions kept production low. For a few years, Italy continued to produce many films but could not regain its strong pre-1914 position. Other countries sought to establish even a small amount of steady production.

Postwar Animosities Fade

This competition was exacerbated by lingering animosities. Great Britain and France were determined to block German films from being shown abroad. Theater owners in both countries agreed not to show German films after the war, for a period of five years in Britain and for fifteen in France.

Unofficial boycotts existed in Belgium and other countries that had suffered during the war.

Yet by 1921, glowing reviews of German films such as Lubitsch's *Madame DuBarry* and Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* made French and British audiences feel that they were missing important developments. Louis Delluc held a Paris screening of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (at a charity benefit, to forestall objections). It created a sensation, and a distributor quickly bought the French rights. *Caligari* opened in March 1922 and became an enormous hit. The exhibitors' ban was forgotten, and a vogue for German Expressionist films developed (**8.1**). In late 1922, *Madame DuBarry* premiered in London, breaking that country's boycott. Postwar hostility was waning.

Moreover, by the early 1920s, European producers realized that American competition was too great for any one country to counter. The United States, with around 15,000 theaters, was the world's largest film market. American producers garnered a huge, predictable income from domestic rentals alone. They could afford to sell films cheaply abroad because most foreign income was pure profit. Commentators noted, however, that if the movie theaters of all European countries were gathered into a single continental market, it would be comparable in size to that of the United States. What if European film industries could cooperate by guaranteeing to import each other's films? European films might make as much money as Hollywood films did. Then their budgets could be raised, their production values would improve, and they might even be able to compete with American films in other world markets. This idea was gradually formulated as the "pan-European" cinema, or "Film Europe."

Nosferatu

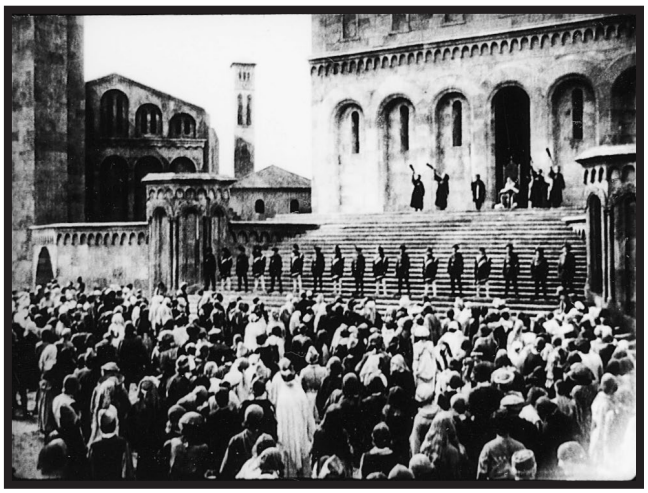
8.1 A 1922 French advertisement for F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* called it "more powerful than *Caligari*."

Concrete Steps toward Cooperation

In 1924, the first steps were taken to create a practical cooperation among European producing nations. Erich Pommer, head of the powerful German company Ufa, concluded a pact with Louis Aubert, a major Parisian distributor. Ufa agreed to release in Germany French films provided by the Aubert company, in exchange for Aubert's distribution of Ufa films in France. Previously, French-German deals had meant the sale of a film or two, but now mutual distribution became regular. Pommer declared: "It is imperative to create a system of regular trade which will enable the producers to amortise their films rapidly. It is necessary to create 'European films,' which will no longer be French, English, Italian, or German films, but entirely 'continental' films."[1] The Ufa-Aubert agreement provided the model for later transactions. Exchange of films among France, Germany, Britain, and other countries increased during the second half of the 1920s.

Firms across Europe devised tactics for making "European films." They imported stars, directors, and other personnel to give an international flavor to their output. Similarly, a coproduction, in which a film would be financed and made by companies in two countries, guaranteed release in at least those two markets. With two firms supplying funds, a project could have a higher budget and better compete with Hollywood's films.

For example, British producer-director Graham Wilcox made *Decameron Nights* (1924), with Ufa providing its studio facilities and half the financing (**8.2**). Actors from several countries participated, including American star Lionel Barrymore, English actress Ivy Close, and Werner Krauss (famous as Dr. Caligari). The result was highly popular in several countries, including the United States. Producers and filmmakers from abroad often worked in Germany because the production facilities there were the best in Europe. In 1924, the young Alfred Hitchcock began his career as a designer on British films made at Ufa, where he watched Murnau working on *The Last Laugh* (see 5.22–5.23). His first two films as a director, *The Pleasure Garden* (1925) and *The Mountain Eagle* (1926), were British-German coproductions shot in Berlin.



Decameron Nights

8.2 Ufa's large, technically sophisticated studios permitted the construction of epic-style sets of Renaissance Venice for the British-German coproduction, *Decameron Nights*.

Success Cut Short

By mid-decade, Germany's film industry was the leader in an increasingly cooperative pan-European effort. To be sure, many big coproductions failed to gain the anticipated international success because cautious producers tended to use standard formulas. "International appeal" also too often meant imitations of Hollywood-style films, with a loss of the distinctive national qualities that attracted viewers to movies such as *Caligari* and *Potemkin.* Coproductions and international casts, however, gradually made European films more competitive internationally. Cross-border arrangements created Spanish-French, German-Swedish, and other multinational films.

The Film Europe effort also led to import quotas in some countries. In Germany, a distributor could import one film for every German film it had circulated the previous year. France introduced a less ambitious limit of seven imported films for each French one distributed. In 1927, Great Britain instituted a cautious quota calling for a small percentage of British footage to be distributed and exhibited in the United Kingdom. Over the years, this percentage was to increase gradually, allowing the production sector to grow to meet the demand.

Even countries with more limited production created quotas. In Portugal, one-tenth of screen time had to be reserved for domestic films—usually newsreels or travelogues preceding an imported feature. Although these quotas were purportedly directed against all imported films, it was common knowledge that their main target was Hollywood films.

Between 1924 and 1927, the Europeans, led by Germany, Britain, and France, built the base for a continental market. Slowly their efforts reduced the number of American film imports and replaced them with European ones. This table shows the percentage of feature films released in Germany, France, and Britain in 1926 and 1929, by the main countries of origin.

	PERCENT OF FILMS RELEASED IN					
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	GERMANY		FRANCE		BRITAIN	
	1926	1929	1926	1929	1926	1929
United States	45	33	79	48	84	75
Germany	39	45	6	30	6	9
France	4	4	10	12	3	2
Britain	0.4	4	0.4	6	5	13

Germany, already the strongest film industry, benefited most from cooperative efforts. France, struggling in a production crisis, gained least; the decline in American films there was largely offset by other imports. Still, Film Europe might gradually have improved Europe's situation had the effort continued.

Abrupt changes cut it short. Most important was the introduction of sound in 1929. Dialogue created language barriers, and each country's producers began to hope that they could succeed locally because English-language imports would decline. Several countries did benefit from audiences' desire for sound films in their own languages, and some national industries became major forces as a result of sound. Competitiveness among European nations reappeared.

In addition, the Great Depression began to hit Europe in 1929. Faced by hard times, many businesses and governments became more nationalistic and less interested in international cooperation. The rise of extreme left-wing and right-wing dictatorships in Europe and Asia increased divisiveness and territorial rivalries, a trend that would eventually lead to another global war. Film Europe was moribund by the early 1930s, but some of its effects lingered. Some films still circulated internationally, and firms collaborated on coproductions.

THE "INTERNATIONAL STYLE"

The Blending of Stylistic Traits

Stylistic influences also circulated among countries. French Impressionism, German Expressionism, and Soviet Montage began as largely national trends, but soon the filmmakers exploring these styles became aware of

each other's work. By the mid-1920s, an international avant-garde style blended traits of all three movements.

Caligari's success in France in 1922 led French directors to add Expressionist touches to their work. Impressionist director Marcel L'Herbier told two parallel stories of famous characters in *Don Juan et Faust* (1923), using Expressionist-style sets and costumes in the Faust scenes (**8.3**). In 1928, Jean Epstein combined Impressionist camera techniques with Expressionist set design to create an eerie, portentous tone in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, based on Edgar Allan Poe's story (**8.4**).

At the same time, French Impressionist traits of subjective camera devices were cropping up in German films. Karl Grune's *The Street*, an early example of the street film (see New Objectivity), used multiple superimpositions to show the protagonist's visions (**8.5**). *The Last Laugh* and *Variety* popularized subjective cinematographic effects that had originated in France (see 5.22–5.24). By the mid-1920s, the boundaries between the French Impressionist and German Expressionist movements were blurred.

The Montage movement started somewhat later, but imported films soon allowed Soviet directors to pick up on European stylistic trends. The rapid rhythmic editing pioneered by Epstein and Abel Gance in 1923 was pushed further by Soviet filmmakers after 1926 (see Editing p. 112). Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg's 1926 adaptation of Gogol's *The Cloak* contained exaggerations in the acting and mise-en-scène that were reminiscent of Expressionist films (**8.6**). In turn, from 1926 onward, Soviet Montage films wielded influence abroad. Leftist filmmakers in Germany embraced the Soviet style to make politically charged cinema. A shot from the final march scene in *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück* ("Mother Krausen's Journey to Happiness," 1929, Piel Jutzi; **8.7**) echoes the climactic demonstration scene in Pudovkin's *Mother* (see 6.46). Soviet influence intensified in the 1930s, when leftist filmmaking responded to the rise of Fascism.

Two of the most notable English directors of the 1920s reflected the influence of French Impressionism. Anthony Asquith's second feature, *Underground* (1928), used a freely moving camera and several subjective superimpositions to tell a story of love and jealousy in a working-class milieu (**8.8**). Alfred Hitchcock's boxing picture, *The Ring* (1927), demonstrated his absorption of Impressionist techniques in its many subjective passages (**8.9**). Hitchcock also acknowledged his debts to German Expressionism, an influence evident in *The Lodger* (1926). For decades, he would draw on avant-garde techniques he learned in the 1920s.

The international influence of the commercial avant-garde reached as far as Japan. By the 1920s, Japan was absorbing European modernism in its arts, primarily literature and painting. Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, and Surrealism were all welcomed. One young filmmaker, Teinosuke Kinugasa, was already well established in commercial production. With the help of some Tokyo modernist writers, he independently produced a bizarre 1926 film. *A Page of Madness* carried Expressionist and Impressionist techniques to new extremes. Taking a cue from *Caligari*, Kinugasa set the action in a madhouse, with distorting camera devices and Expressionist mise-en-scène frequently reflecting the deranged visions of the inmates (**8.10**; compare this with shots from *Caligari* and other German Expressionist films in Chapter 5). The plot that motivates these strange scenes is full of flashbacks and fantasy passages. Kinugasa's next film, *Crossroads* (1928), was less difficult but still reflected influences from European avant-garde films. It was the first Japanese feature to receive a significant release in Europe.

Don Juan et Faus

8.3 Expressionist mise-en-scène in L'Herbier's *Don Juan et Faust*.

The Fall of the House of Usher

8.4 A corner in a room of Usher's mansion in Epstein's *The Fall of the House of Usher* displays the influence of German Expressionism.

The Street

8.5 In *The Street*, Impressionist-style superimpositions depict the hero's visions of delights that await him in the city.

The Cloak

8.6 *The Cloak* contains grotesque elements that recall German Expressionism, such as this giant steaming teapot that heralds the beginning of a strange dream sequence.

Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Gluck

8.7 In *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück*, a low angle isolates the major characters against the sky in Soviet Montage fashion as they march in protest.

Underground

8.8 As the heroine (not shown) of *Underground* looks up at a building, a superimposition reminiscent of French Impressionism conveys her vision of the villain.

The Ring

8.9 In *The Ring*, Hitchcock used distorting mirrors in this shot of dancers to suggest the hero's mental turmoil during a party.

A Page of Madness

8.10 An enigmatic scene in *A Page of Madness*, in which an inmate obsessed with dancing appears in an elaborate costume, performing in an Expressionist set containing a whirling, striped ball.

The President

8.11 In *The President* and other early films, Dreyer often calls as much attention to the set and incidental props as to the main action (compare with 3.14).

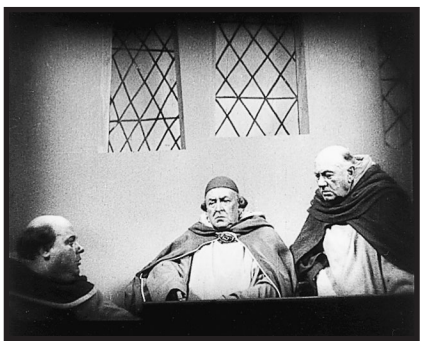
Carl Dreyer: European Director

The epitome of the international director of the late silent era was Carl Dreyer. He began in Denmark as a journalist and then worked as a scriptwriter at Nordisk from 1913 on, when the company was still a powerful force (see Denmark: Nordisk and Ole Oleson). Dreyer's first film as a director, *The President* (1919), used traditional Scandinavian elements, including eye-catching sets (**8.11**), a relatively austere style, and dramatic lighting. His second film, *Leaves from Satan's Book* (1920), was also made for Nordisk; influenced by D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance*, it told a series of stories of suffering and faith.

At this point, one of the pioneers of Nordisk, Lau Lauritzen, departed, and the company declined. Both Dreyer and Benjamin Christensen left to work in Sweden for Svenska, Christensen making *Witchcraft through the Ages* while Dreyer did a bittersweet comedy, *The Parson's Widow* (1920). Over the next few years, Dreyer moved between Denmark and Germany, making *Michael* (1924) at the Ufa studio. Back in Denmark, he moved to the rising Palladium firm and made *Thou Shalt Honor Thy Wife* (aka *The Master of the House*, 1925). This chamber comedy shows a family deceiving an autocratic husband in order to make him realize how he has bullied his wife. It established Dreyer's reputation internationally. After a brief sojourn in Norway making a coproduction, Dreyer was hired by the prestigious Société Générale de Films (which was also producing Gance's *Napoléon*) to make a film in France.

The result was perhaps the greatest of all international-style silent films, *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928). The cast and crew represented a mixture of nationalities. The Danish director supervised Hungarian cinematographer

The Passion of Joan of Arc



8.12, *left* A decentered close-up against a blank background in *The Passion of Joan of Arc* both disconcerts and allows us to watch Falconetti's moving performance in the title role.

8.13, *right* Mismatched windows in the courtroom set of *The Passion of Joan of Arc* recall Hermann Warm's earlier career in German Expressionist filmmaking.

Vampyr

8.14, *left* In *Vampyr*, the hero trails the disembodied shadow of a wooden-legged man and sees it rejoin its owner.

8.15, *right* This shot shows the "dead" protagonist's point of view through a window in his coffin as the vampiric old woman he has been investigating peers down at him (*Vampyr*).

Rudolph Maté and designer Hermann Warm, who had worked on *Caligari* and other German Expressionist films. Most of the cast was French.

Joan of Arc blended influences from the French, German, and Soviet avant-garde movements into a fresh, daring style. Concentrating on Joan's trial and execution, Dreyer used many close-ups, often decentered and filmed against blank white backgrounds. The dizzying spatial relations emphasized the actors' faces. Dreyer used the newly available panchromatic film stock (see **S**tyle and Technological Changes), which allowed for the actors to do without makeup. In the close framings, the images revealed every facial detail. Renée Falconetti gave a sincere, intense performance as Joan (**8.12**). The sparse settings contained touches of muted Expressionist design (**8.13**), and the dynamic low framings and the accelerated subjective editing in the torture-chamber scene suggested the influence of Soviet Montage and French Impressionism (**Video 8.1**).

Despite criticisms that *Joan of Arc* depended too much on lengthy conversations for a silent film, it was widely hailed as a masterpiece. The producer, however, was in financial difficulties after *Napoléon*'s extravagances and was unable to support another Dreyer project. Because Danish production was deteriorating, Dreyer turned to a strategy common among experimental filmmakers: he found a patron. A rich nobleman underwrote *Vampyr* (1932) in exchange for being allowed to play its protagonist.

As the name suggests, *Vampyr* is a horror film, but it bears little resemblance to such Hollywood examples of that genre as *Dracula* (which Universal had produced the previous year). Instead of presenting bats, wolves, and clear-cut rules about vampires' behavior, this film evokes unexplained, barely glimpsed terrors. A tourist who stays at a country inn in a foggy landscape encounters a series of supernatural events as he wanders around the neighborhood (**8.14**). He finds that the illness of a local landowner's daughter seems to be connected with her mysterious doctor and a sinister old lady who appears at intervals. The protagonist's investigation brings on a dream in which he imagines himself dead (**8.15**). Many scenes in *Vampyr* give a sense of dreadful events occurring offscreen, with the camera tracking and panning just too late to catch them. Dreyer used lighting, misty landscapes, and camera movement to enhance the macabre atmosphere.

Vampyr was so different from other films of the period that it was greeted with incomprehension. It marked the end of Dreyer's international wanderings. He returned to Denmark and, unable to find backing for another project, resumed life as a journalist. During World War II, he recommenced feature filmmaking.

THE SPREAD OF "ART CINEMA" INSTITUTIONS

French Impressionist and German Expressionist films led many observers to distinguish between mainstream commercial cinema and a separate *art cinema*. Valid or not, the distinction has been widely used ever since. Art films, with their more limited audience, gave rise to a new set of institutions during the 1920s.[2] Those institutions shaped the film culture of the time and left a legacy that is still with us.

Paris was the center of the earliest initiatives. For several journals, critic Louis Delluc wrote articles championing Abel Gance, Marcel L'Herbier, and other early Impressionists. He also founded what may have been the first ciné-club. In 1921, another critic, Riccioto Canudo, organized the Club des Amis du Septième Art, which attracted painters, poets, and musicians.

Canudo further brought cinema into the world of high art by establishing screenings and discussions in the prestigious annual art exhibition known as the Salon d'Automne. After Canudo's death, film continued to be part of the art world, through exhibitions at major galleries and in a wing of a 1925 Paris exposition of worldwide modern design.

In accord with the Film Europe impulse, international events put cinema on display. Prestigious German art shows included set designs and models, and a major Berlin exposition, Kino und Photo Ausstellug (Kipho), promoted forthcoming films with splashy exhibits, including the full-sized dragon from *Die Nibelungen*. A 1928 exhibition in the Hague featured Soviet Montage films. By the end of the silent era, museums and galleries were already programming features and shorts tracing the development of avant-garde cinema.

Paris was likewise the birthplace of "art theatres," venues devoted to screening alternative cinema. In 1924 Jean Tedesco, a critic, opened the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, where he showed famous films in rotation and premiered films that could find no other distribution.

Soon Belgium, Spain, Japan, and other countries had launched specialized theatres and ciné-clubs. In London, the Film Society showed classics, new films, and—especially given England's strict censorship laws—films that had not been permitted public screening. The Film Society was a central force in introducing Soviet films to English-speaking audiences. At the same time, the Film Arts Guild of New York pioneered the idea of art-cinema screenings in the United States. Thanks to the Film Arts Guild and the Filmarte, a Los Angeles theatre, American filmmakers gained access to avant-garde films from abroad.

A growing number of journals promoted art films. Delluc founded *Cinéa*, which Tedesco bought to help Delluc finance his filmmaking (see A Chronology of French Impressionist Cinema, p. 75). As *Cinéa-Ciné Pour Tous*, it became a major forum for filmmakers' writings. The main international periodical of the time, *Close-Up*, ran from 1927 to 1933. *Close-Up* championed unconventional cinema of all types, from Pabst's films to extreme avant-garde work. One of the editors wrote the first English-language book on Soviet cinema.

The attention generated by ciné-clubs, expositions, journals, and specialized theatres helped create a canon of classics that is still in force today. Just as important, when film archives began to be established in the 1930s, the art-cinema tradition inspired curators to preserve films that offered something different from mainstream entertainment.

FILM EXPERIMENTS OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM INDUSTRY

As specialized art films became distinct from the popular entertainment cinema during the 1920s, an even more radical type of filmmaking appeared. This was *experimental*, or independent avant-garde, cinema. Experimental films were usually short, and they were produced outside the film industry. Indeed, they were often deliberate attempts to undercut the conventions of commercial narrative filmmaking.

To support their work, filmmakers might use their own money, find a rich patron, or work part-time within the mainstream industry. Moreover, the ciné-clubs and specialized theaters that had arisen to promote and exhibit art cinema also provided venues for more experimental cinema (see The Spread of "Art Cinema" Institutions box). As with other types of alternative filmmaking, experimental trends emerged soon after World War I as isolated phenomena in different countries before becoming more international.

During the early decades of the century, painters and writers innovated a wide variety of modernist styles,

including Cubism, abstract art, Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism. In many cases, artists already established in these movements made one or two films. In other cases, young filmmakers became enchanted with the idea of creating an alternative, noncommercial cinema.

During the 1910s, a few experimental films resulted from these stylistic movements, but none of these is known to survive. Even before 1910, Italian artists reportedly made short films using hand-colored abstract shapes. In 1914, some Russian Futurist painters made a parodic film called *Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret No. 13*, but little is known about this intriguing work.

A few Futurist films were made in Italy. One was *Vita futurista* ("Futurist Life"), by a group of Futurist artists during 1916 and 1917. The movement was concerned with celebrating the new "machine age." Artists avoided conventional logic and were fascinated with capturing rapid actions, even portraying successive events as happening simultaneously. *Vita futurista* consisted of several unconnected, absurd segments, including the painter Giacomo Balla's courting and marrying a chair. Surviving illustrations show that the film used distorting mirrors and superimpositions in ways that may have anticipated the French Impressionists and later avant-garde filmmakers. A commercial producer made two films directed by Anton Bragaglia, a Futurist photographer: *Il perfido canto* and *Thais* (both 1916). The first, which Bragaglia claimed contained innovative techniques, is lost. *Thais* survives, but it is less radical than the others, using a continuing narrative and sets, blurred focus, and costume designs that lend it a mildly Futuristic look.

Lacking sufficient evidence about these early experimental films, we must start our account of the independent avant-garde cinema with the 1920s. There were six major trends in experimental filmmaking: abstract animation, Dada-related production, Surrealism, cinéma pur, lyrical documentaries, and experimental narrative.

Abstract Animation

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, artists had moved toward works with increasingly nonobjective styles. Sometimes only the title enabled the viewer to tell what the shapes in a painting represented. In 1910, Wassily Kandinsky's *Abstract Watercolor* made the final break: the painting contained shapes and colors, but it depicted nothing. Other artists quickly followed suit, and pictorial abstraction became one of the major trends of modern art.

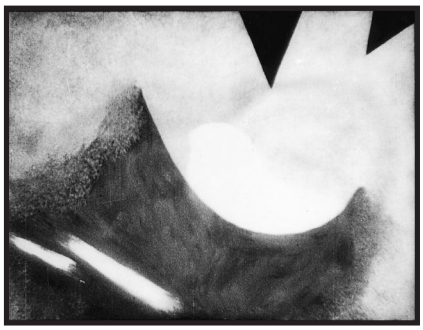
The nonrepresentational style took some time to make its way into film. In the late 1910s in Germany, a few artists believed that because film was a visual art like painting, its purest form would be abstract. One of them, Hans Richter, had studied art and worked with an Expressionist group. During World War I, Richter encountered a group of Dadaists in Switzerland, including a Swedish artist, Viking Eggeling, who had also lived in Germany. Eggeling was fascinated with the idea of using art as a universal means of spiritual communication. Richter and Eggeling returned to Germany, and each worked on "scrolls," long strips of paper containing slightly different drawings. Both sought ways of transforming these into moving images that would be a sort of "visual music." The pair was allowed to use Ufa's facilities, and from 1920 to 1921, they experimented with animating short strips of frames photographed from the scrolls. Richter claims to have made the first abstract animated film, *Rhythmus 21*, in 1921, but it was not shown publicly until years later.

The earliest abstract animated film was apparently made in Germany by Walter Ruttmann. Ruttmann had also studied as a painter, working in abstract and Expressionist styles. From an early date, however, he was also interested in film. In 1913, he condemned the Autorenfilm (see Germany) as a pointless attempt to inject quality into the cinema by drawing on literature:

> You can't turn film into a work of art by augmenting and exalting it with "quality." You can gather together the best mimes in the world, you can let them perform in the most exquisite paradise, you can adorn the programs of your film dramas with the names of the most eminent poets—art will never result *that way.* A work of art will result only if it is born of the possibilities and demands of its material.[3]

Ruttmann's attitude would be shared by many experimental filmmakers in the 1920s. In 1918, he too became intrigued with the idea of "moving paintings" and began to cast about for a means of creating them through film.

Apparently knowing little of commercial animation techniques, Ruttmann painted with oil on glass, wiping off portions of the wet paint and repainting them. He photographed each change from above with illumination placed beneath the glass. His *Lichtspiel Opus 1* was previewed in Frankfurt in early April 1921 and given a gala premiere in Berlin later that month. Ruttmann went on to make three similar short films, *Lichtspiel Opus 2* (1921), *Ruttmann Opus 3* (1924), and *Ruttmann Opus 4* (1925). (These are now known as *Opus 1*, *Opus 2*, and so on.) In each, abstract forms grow, shrink, and transmute in a lively fashion (**8.16**). Ruttmann intended that his films be shown with original musical scores and with hand-coloring. These delightful short films earned him commissions to make theatrical commercials and special sequences in feature films,

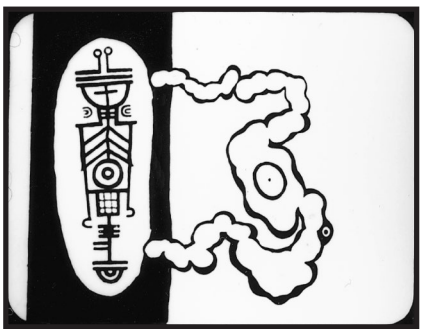

Opus 2

Diagonal Symphony

8.16, *left* In *Opus 2*, Ruttmann creates subtle gradations of texture as abstract shapes slide across each other, blending and separating rhythmically.

8.17, *right* In *Diagonal Symphony*, complicated curved shapes swirl around the basic diagonal motif that organizes the abstract patterns throughout the film.

Le Retour à la raison


Entr'acte

8.18, *left* In *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, shades of gray suggest the depth in a setting; the moving figures consist of jointed silhouette puppets.

8.19, *right* Len Lye based the abstract figures in *Tusalava* on Australian Aboriginal art.

such as Kriemhild's "Dream of the Falcon" in Fritz Lang's *Siegfried.*

In the meantime, Richter had managed to make three similar short animated films, the *Rhythmus* series (tentatively dated 1921, 1923, and 1925). His partner, Eggeling, met an experienced animator, Erna Niemeyer; she traced his scroll drawings and photographed them to make *Symphonie diagonale* (*Diagonal Symphony*). Eggeling saw his images as the equivalent of music, dictating that the short film be shown without any sound accompaniment (**8.17**). *Diagonal Symphony* was first shown in late 1924, a year before Eggeling died.

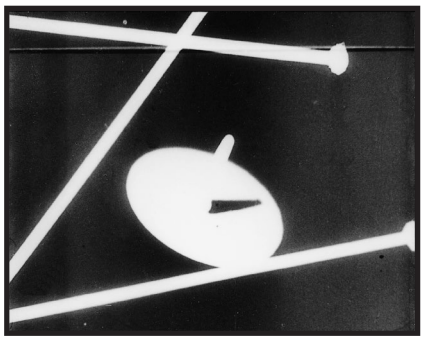
The technique of abstract animation influenced commercial cinema, most notably in the work of a distinctive filmmaker, Lotte Reiniger. Trained as an actress during the 1910s, she was also skilled at cutting out delicate silhouettes. During the early 1920s, she did special-effects sequences and advertisements. From 1923 to 1926, she created her most important film, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, assisted by Ruttmann and others. *Prince Achmed* was the first major animated feature (preceding Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*). *Prince Achmed* told an Arabian Nights fairy tale by means of silhouette figures photographed against subtly shaded backgrounds (**8.18**; **Video 8.2**). Reiniger made such silhouette fantasy films for decades in several countries.

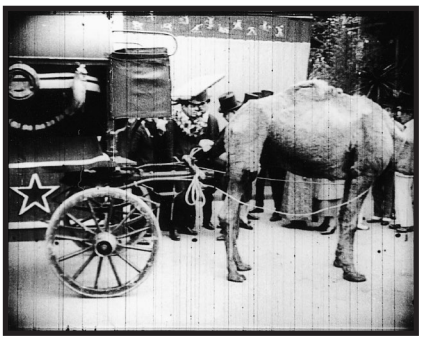
On May 3, 1925, an important matinee of abstract films was held at an Ufa theater in Berlin. It included *Diagonal Symphony*, three of Ruttmann's *Opus* shorts, and Richter's *Rhythmus* series. Also on the program were two French films, René Clair's *Entr'acte* and Dudley Murphy and Fernand Léger's *Ballet mécanique* (see 8.28). German filmmakers recognized a fresh experimental impulse. Richter and Ruttmann abandoned abstract animation to make films using real objects, and the tradition nearly disappeared at this point.

It resurfaced unexpectedly in 1929. The London Film Society provided a young New Zealander, the abstract painter and poet Len Lye, with the funds for a short film. The drawings occupied Lye from 1927 to 1929, while he supported himself as a curtain drawer in a theater. *Tusalava*, which premiered at the Film Society in 1929, baffled most spectators with its esoteric imagery (**8.19**). Despite the film's reception, Lye went on to become one of the most important abstract animators of the sound era.

Dada Filmmaking

Dada was a movement that attracted artists in all media. It began around 1915, as a result of artists' sense of the vast, meaningless loss of life in World War I. Artists in New York, Zurich, France, and Germany proposed to sweep aside traditional values and to elevate an absurdist view of the world. They would base artistic creativity on randomness and imagination. Max Ernst displayed an


Anémic cinéma


Entr'acte

8.20, *left* Man Ray created "Rayogram" images without a camera by scattering objects like pins and tacks directly on the film strip, exposing it briefly to light, and developing the result (*Le Retour à la raison*).

8.21, *right* Clair's Dadaist fantasy *Entr'acte* concludes with an irreverent funeral scene in which the hearse is pulled, often at dizzying speed and over roller-coaster tracks, by a camel.

artwork and provided a hatchet so that spectators could demolish it. Marcel Duchamp invented "ready-made" artwork, in which a found object is placed in a museum and labeled; in 1917, he created a scandal by signing a urinal "R. Mutt" and trying to enter it in a prestigious show. Dadaists were fascinated by *collage*, the technique of assembling disparate elements in bizarre juxtapositions. Ernst, for example, made collages by pasting together scraps of illustrations from advertisements and technical manuals.

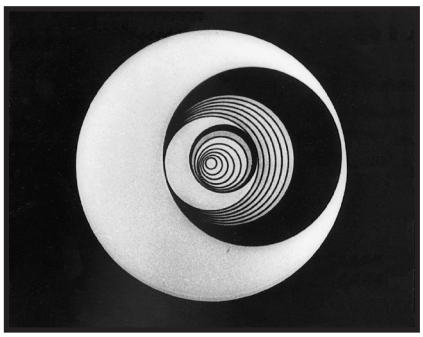
Under the leadership of poet Tristan Tzara, Dadaist publications, exhibitions, and performances flourished during the late 1910s and early 1920s. The performance "soirées" included such events as poetry readings in which several passages were performed simultaneously. On July 7, 1923, the last major Dada event, the "Soirée du 'Coeur à Barbe'" ("Soirée of the 'Bearded Heart'"), included three short films: *Manhatta* by American artists Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand (see 8.34), one of Richter's *Rhythmus* abstract works, and the American artist Man Ray's first film, the ironically titled *Le Retour à la raison* ("Return to Reason"). The element of chance certainly entered into the creation of *Le Retour à la raison* because Tzara gave Ray only twenty-four hours' notice that he was to make a film for the program. Ray combined some hastily shot live footage with stretches of "Rayograms" (**8.20**). The soirée proved a mixed success because Tzara's rivals, led by poet André Breton, provoked a riot in the audience.

This riot was symptomatic of the disagreements that were already bringing Dada to an end. By 1922, it was in serious decline, but key Dada films were still to come. In late 1924, Dada artist Francis Picabia staged his ballet *Relâche* (meaning "performance called off"). Signs in the auditorium bore such statements as "If you are not satisfied, go to hell." During the intermission (or *entr'acte*), René Clair's short film *Entr'acte* was shown, with accompaniment by composer Erik Satie, who had done the music for the entire show. The evening began with a brief film prologue (seen as the opening segment of modern prints of *Entr'acte*) in which Satie and Picabia leap in slow motion into a scene and fire a cannon directly at the audience. The rest of the film, appearing during the intermission, consisted of unconnected, wildly irrational scenes (**8.21**). Picabia summed up the Dada view when he characterized Clair's film: "*Entr'acte* does not believe in very much, in the pleasure of life, perhaps; it believes in the pleasure of inventing, it respects nothing except the desire to *burst out laughing.*"[4]

Dada artist Marcel Duchamp made one foray into cinema during this era. By 1913, Duchamp had moved away from abstract painting to experiment with such forms as ready-mades and kinetic sculptures. The latter included a series of motor-driven spinning discs. With the help of Man Ray, Duchamp filmed some of these discs to create *Anémic cinéma* in 1926. This brief film undercuts traditional notions of cinema as a visual, narrative art. All its shots show either turning abstract discs (**8.22**) or discs with sentences containing elaborate French puns. By emphasizing simple shapes and writing, Duchamp created an "anemic" style. (*Anémic* is also an anagram for *cinéma.*)

Entr'acte and other Dada films were on the 1925 Berlin program, and they convinced German filmmakers such as Ruttman and Richter that modernist style could be created in films without completely abstract, painted images. Richter, who had been linked with virtually every major modern art movement, dabbled in Dada. In his *Ghosts before Breakfast* (1928), special effects show objects rebelling against their normal uses. In reverse motion, cups shatter and reassemble. Bowler hats take on a life of their own and fly through the air, and the ordinary laws of nature seem to be suspended (**8.23**).

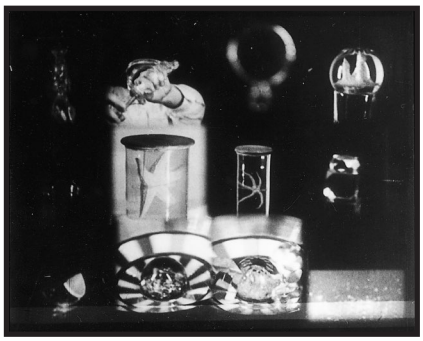
Riven by internal dissension, the European Dada movement was largely over by 1922. Many of its members formed another group, the Surrealists.

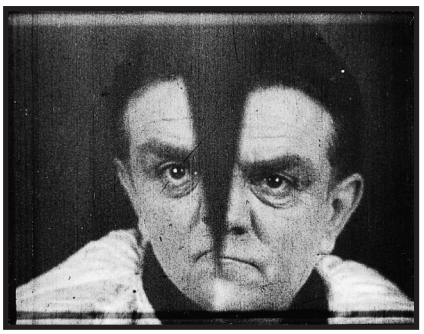

Anémic cinéma

Ghosts before Breakfast

8.22, *left* One of the spinning discs that create the "anemic" form of *Anémic cinéma*.

8.23, *right* In *Ghosts before Breakfast*, a man's head flies off his body as a target is superimposed over him.


L'Étoile de mer


The Seashell and the Clergyman

8.24, *left* Man Ray's *L'Étoile de mer* uses split-screen cinematography to create Surrealist juxtapositions of starfish in jars, roulette wheels, and other objects.

8.25, *right* A split-screen technique creates a bizarre effect in *The Seashell and the Clergyman*: the officer, dressed in baby clothes, seems to split in two.

Surrealism

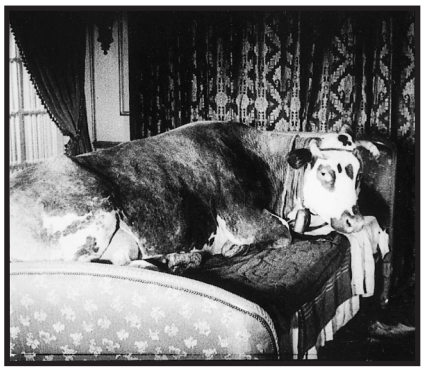
Surrealism resembled Dada in many ways, particularly in its disdain for orthodox art. Like Dada, Surrealism sought startling juxtapositions. André Breton, who led the break with the Dadaists and the creation of Surrealism, cited an image from a work by the Comte de Lautréamont: "Beautiful as the unexpected meeting, on a dissection table, of a sewing machine and an umbrella."[5] The movement was influenced by the emerging theories of psychoanalysis. Rather than depending on pure chance for the creation of artworks, Surrealists sought to tap the unconscious mind. They wanted to render the incoherent narratives of dreams directly in language or images, without the interference of conscious thought processes. Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and Paul Klee were important Surrealist artists.

The ideal Surrealist film differed from Dada works in that it would not be a humorous, chaotic assemblage of events. Instead, it would trace a disturbing, often sexually charged story that followed the inexplicable logic of a dream. With a patron's backing, Dadaist Man Ray moved into Surrealism with *Emak Bakia* (1927), which used many film tricks to suggest a woman's mental state. At the end she is seen in a famous image, her eyes closed, with eyeballs painted on them; she opens her eyes and smiles at the camera. Many Surrealists denounced the film as containing too little narrative. Ray's next film, *L'Étoile de mer* ("The Starfish," 1927), hinted at a story based on a script by Surrealist poet Robert Desnos. It shows a couple in love, interspersed with random shots of starfish, trains, and other objects (**8.24**).

Germaine Dulac, who had already worked extensively in regular feature filmmaking and French Impressionism, turned briefly to Surrealism, directing a screenplay by poet Antonin Artaud. The result was *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928), which combines Impressionist techniques of cinematography with the disjointed narrative logic of Surrealism. A clergyman carrying a large seashell smashes laboratory beakers; an officer intrudes and breaks the shell, to the clergyman's horror. The rest of the film consists of the priest pursuing a beautiful woman through an incongruous series of settings. His love seems to be perpetually thwarted by the intervention of the officer (**8.25**). The initial screening of the film provoked a riot at the small Studio des Ursulines theater, though it is still not clear whether the instigators were Artaud's enemies or his friends, protesting Dulac's softening of the Surrealist tone of the scenario.

Perhaps the quintessential Surrealist film was created in 1928 by novice director Luis Buñuel. A Spanish film enthusiast and modernist poet, Buñuel had come to France and been hired as an assistant by Jean Epstein.

Un Chien andalou


L'Age d'or

8.26, *left* In *Un Chien andalou*, a doorbell is inexplicably represented by hands shaking a cocktail.

8.27, *right* During an elegant party, the heroine of *L'Age d'or* finds an ox in her bed.

Working in collaboration with Salvador Dalí, he made *Un Chien andalou* ("An Andalusian Dog"). Its basic story concerned a quarrel between two lovers, but the time scheme and logic are impossible. The film begins with a sequence in which a man inexplicably slices the heroine's eye with a razor—yet she appears, unharmed, in the next scene. As the quarrel goes on, ants crawl from a hole in a man's hand, the hero hauls a piano stuffed with rotting mules' carcasses across a room, and a pair of hands protrudes through the wall to shake a cocktail (**8.26**). Throughout, intertitles announce meaningless intervals of time passing, as when "sixteen years earlier" appears within an action that continues without pause.

Dalí and Buñuel followed this film with a longer, even more provocative one, *L'Age d'or* ("The Age of Gold," 1930). The tenuous plot concerns two lovers kept apart by the woman's wealthy parents and a disapproving society. An early scene shows a pompous seaside ceremony in which presiding bishops wither to skeletons. Later, a man who is shot falls up to the ceiling, and the heroine sucks on the toes of a statue to express her sexual frustration. The film teems with erotic imagery (**8.27**), and the ending portrays a figure clearly intended to represent Christ emerging from a sadistic orgy. *L'Age d'or* provoked riots during its initial screenings and was banned. It remained almost impossible to see for more than four decades.

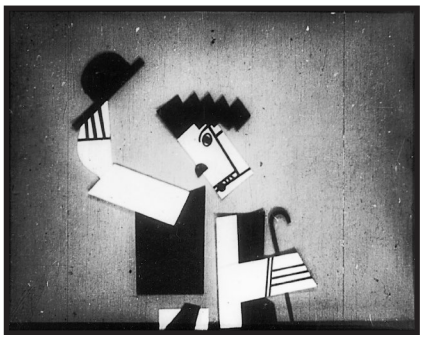
During the early 1930s, Surrealism as a unified movement was breaking up. Some artists became involved in leftist or anarchist politics, and Dalí earned their wrath through his fascination with Hitler. By 1933, the European phase of the movement was over, but, as with Dada, Surrealism's influence was felt strongly in the era after World War II.

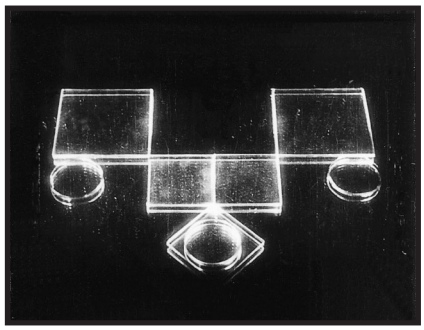
Cinéma Pur

In 1924, a casual collaboration of artists resulted in an abstract film that did not use animated drawings but rather everyday objects and rhythmic editing. American set designer Dudley Murphy had decided to mount a series of "visual symphonies," the first of which was a rather literal-minded ballet film, *Danse macabre* (1922). In Paris, he encountered Man Ray and modernist poet Ezra Pound, who inspired him to do a more abstract work. Ray shot some footage, but the French painter Fernand Léger completed the filming of *Ballet mécanique.* Murphy did the cinematography, and Léger directed a complex film juxtaposing shots of objects like pot lids and machine parts with images of his own paintings. There were prismatic shots of women's faces, as well as an innovative shot of a washerwoman climbing a flight of steps, repeated identically many times. Léger aspired to make a film about Charlie Chaplin, and he opened and closed *Ballet mécanique* with an animated figure of the comedian in his own painting style (**8.28**).

In the wake of works like *Ballet mécanique*, some filmmakers realized that they could organize nonnarrative films around abstract visual qualities of the physical world. Because commercial cinema, especially that of Hollywood, was strongly associated with narrative, such abstract films seemed untainted, owing nothing to literary or theatrical influences. These filmmakers were not unified by membership in any modernist movement, such as Dada or Surrealism. Indeed, they largely avoided the irreverence of Dada and the psychic explorations of Surrealism. These diverse, widely scattered filmmakers wanted to reduce film to its most basic elements in order to create lyricism and pure form.

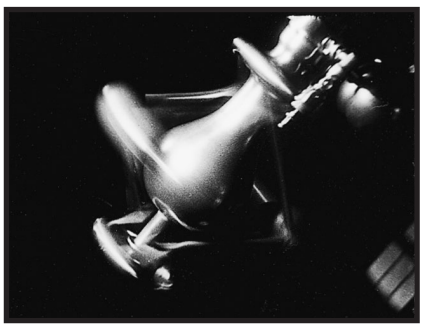
Indeed, French proponents of this approach soon termed it *cinéma pur*, or "pure cinema." One of these was Henri Chomette, who had worked as an assistant director for commercial filmmakers such as Jacques de Baroncelli and Jacques Feyder. In 1925, a rich count commissioned an experimental short, *Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse* ("The Play of Reflections and Speed," 1925). For the "speed" portion Chomette mounted his camera at various angles


Ballet mécanique


Cinq minutes de cinéma pur

8.28, *left* Murphy and Léger's *Ballet mécanique* pays tribute to Chaplin with a moving puppet designed by Léger.

8.29, *right* *Cinq minutes de cinema pur* begins by dissolving among shots of glass objects in changing patterns against a black background.


Thème et variations

8.30, 8.31 *Thème et variations* alternates machine parts and plants (not shown) with a ballerina's dance, suggesting an abstract graphic similarity between different kinds of movements and shapes.

on a moving subway car, often filming in fast motion. He juxtaposed these shots with views of a series of shiny objects. His next film, *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* ("Five Minutes of Pure Cinema," 1926), was made for the growing circuit of specialized cinemas (**8.29**; compare with 8.17). After these two films, Chomette became a mainstream director.

Following her venture into Surrealism, Germaine Dulac embraced cinéma pur in *Disque 927* (1928), *Thème et variations* (1928), and *Arabesque* (1929). As the titles suggest, Dulac equated her short, lyrical studies to musical pieces (**8.30**, **8.31**). With the coming of sound, Dulac could not finance her films independently, and, unwilling to return to mainstream filmmaking, she worked primarily in newsreels after 1929.

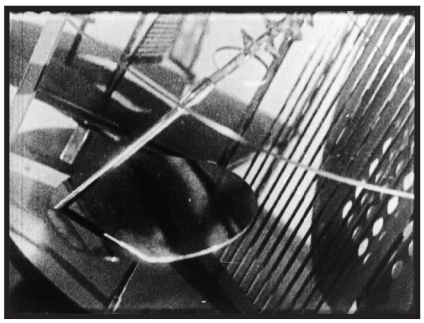
The concept of pure cinema surfaced in other countries, though seldom under that name. Some photographers experimented briefly with cinema. László Moholy-Nagy, a Hungarian photographer and sculptor, created several films. Among these was *Lichtspiel, schwarz-weiss-grau* ("Play of Light, Black-White-Gray," 1930), made while he was teaching at the Bauhaus. The title is a pun: *Lichtspiel* means both "movie" and "play of light" (**8.32**). American photographer Ralph Steiner's H_2O (1929) consisted of increasingly abstract images of water (**8.33**). Steiner made two similar films and then went on to photograph some of the most important documentaries of the next decade. The pure-cinema impulse created a tradition of experimental cinema that continued for decades (see Chapter 21).

Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony

Some filmmakers experimented by taking their cameras outdoors and capturing poetic aspects of urban landscapes. Their films formed another new genre, the *city symphony*. These works were part documentary, part experimental film.

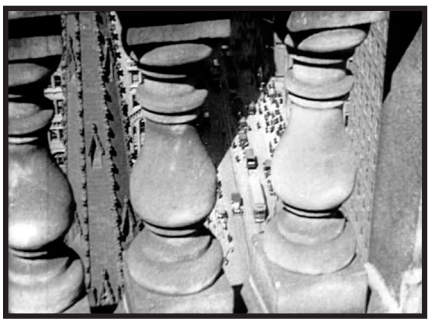
The earliest known city symphony, and, indeed, perhaps the first experimental film made in the United States, was created by modern artist Charles Sheeler and photographer Paul Strand in 1920. It was shown as a scenic short in a commercial theater in New York the following year under the title *New York the Magnificent*, but the filmmakers later dubbed it *Manhatta*, the title by which it came to be known. The pair filmed scenes near the Battery Park area of Manhattan, creating evocative, often nearly abstract views of the city (**8.34**). Although the film had little distribution initially, it was revived in art theaters during the second half of the decade and probably inspired later filmmaking.

By that era, the city symphony had become more common. In 1925, Brazilian director Alberto Cavalcanti, working in France, made *Rien que les heures* ("Nothing but the Hours," 1926). It juxtaposes two different types of material: candid documentary shots and staged



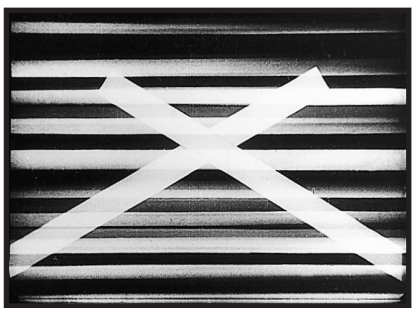
8.32 Filming one of his own kinetic sculptures, the *Light-Space Modulator*, Moholy-Nagy created shifting patterns of shadows and reflected light, produced by its moving metallic parts, for *Lichtspiel, schwarz-weiss-grau.*

8.33 In this shot from Steiner's H_2O, the reflections on the surface of the water create an image so abstract that we can barely recognize its subject.



8.34 A dramatic view of the street far below through a balustrade in *Manhatta*.

8.35 A drunken, perhaps dying, old woman wandering the streets forms one motif in *Rien que les heures*.



8.36, 8.37 In *Berlin*, Ruttmann cuts from an abstract moving image of bars forming an "X" to a similar composition created by a railroad crossing gate.

scenes. Shopkeepers open their shutters, patrons eat at cafés, a pimp kills a woman, an old lady staggers through the streets (**8.35**). Cavalcanti refuses to develop any of these situations into a coherent plot, instead weaving together motifs to suggest the passage of time all over Paris.

Cavalcanti's film was followed by Walter Ruttmann's feature, *Berlin: die Sinfonie der Grossstadt* (*Berlin, Symphony of a Great City*, 1927). It also provided a cross section of life in a city during one day. Coming from the tradition of abstract animation, Ruttmann begins the film with some geometric shapes, matching them graphically with documentary images (**8.36**, **8.37**). Subsequent shots explore the abstract qualities of machines, building façades, store-window displays, and the like. Ruttmann includes social commentary, as when he cuts from a homeless woman with her children to plates of food in a fancy restaurant. *Berlin* circulated widely in commercial theaters and was one of the silent era's most influential documentaries.

The poetic city symphony proved fertile ground for young filmmakers working for the art-cinema and ciné-club circuit. For example, the Dutch documentarist Joris Ivens began as cofounder of a major club, the Filmliga, in Amsterdam in 1927. His first completed film was a lyrical, abstract study of a drawbridge, *The Bridge* (1928). Its success in art-film circles led to other films, including *Rain* (1929). *Rain* explores the changing look of Amsterdam before, during, and after a shower: the sheen of water on tile roofs and windows and the spatter of raindrops in the canals and in puddles (**8.38**). Again, *Rain* was well received among art-cinema audiences across Europe and inspired many imitations.

The city-symphony genre was diverse. The film might be lyrical, displaying the effects of wind and water. Henri Storck, who had formed the ciné-club for the

Rain

The Life and Death of 9413—a Hollywood Extra

8.38, *left* Ivens captures the effects of the last few drops of a shower in a puddle on a brick pavement in *Rain*.

8.39, *right* A split-screen effect in *The Life and Death of 9413—a Hollywood Extra* juxtaposes the hero's naive face with his abstract vision of Hollywood.

Belgian seaside town of Ostende, recorded the town's summertime sights in his *Images d'Ostende* (1929). In contrast, Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* commented on Soviet society by weaving together several cities in a "day-in-the-life-of" documentary. Vertov demonstrated the power of the cinema by showing the filmmaking process within his film and by using extensive special effects (see 6.51). The city symphony has proved an enduring genre among documentarists and experimental filmmakers.

Experimental Narrative

By the late 1920s, filmmakers in several countries were using the techniques and styles of the independent experimental cinema to question narrative conventions. In the United States, some experimental directors adapted techniques from German Expressionism and French Impressionism into cinematic forms suited to low-budget, independent production. During the late 1920s, noncommercial European filmmakers pushed both narrative and abstract techniques still further.

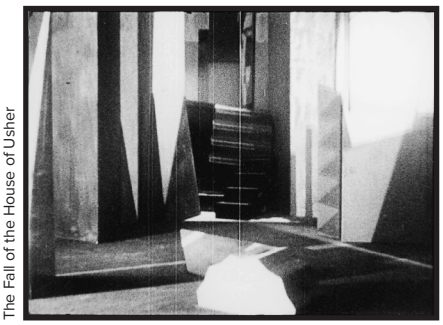
In the United States, some filmmakers outside the commercial industry wanted to treat film as a modern art. Few of the more radical experimental films made in Europe during this era were shown in America, however. Experimental filmmakers were inspired mainly by German Expressionist and French Impressionist films.

Like Dreyer, Robert Florey was an international director, though on a more modest scale. Born in France, he was thoroughly familiar with both the Impressionist and the Expressionist movements. He came to Hollywood in 1921, serving as United Artists' technical adviser on French subjects and eventually directing minor features. In 1927, he turned to experimental filmmaking, directing the short *The Life and Death of 9413—a Hollywood Extra* (aka *Life and Death of a Hollywood Extra*). This ingenious film, made for a reported $100, combined close shots of actors against black backgrounds with stylized miniature scenes, made of simple paper cut-outs and erector-set objects, shot with an ordinary light on a kitchen table (**8.39**). The film was a witty satire on Hollywood's uncaring treatment of aspiring talent. Florey's cinematographer, Gregg Toland, went on to photograph many major films, including *Citizen Kane*. The special effects were devised by Slavko Vorkapich, another émigré fascinated with avant-garde technique; during the 1930s, he created elaborate montage sequences for several Hollywood movies. Florey went on to make three more experimental shorts. The only one that survives, *The Love of Zero* (1928), contains many innovative camera techniques. Florey soon moved back into commercial production, directing many stylish middle- and low-budget features, ranging from the Marx Brothers' first film, *The Cocoanuts* (1929), to the horror film *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932).

Almost simultaneously, some filmmakers hit on the idea of using German Expressionism to bring stories by Edgar Allan Poe to the screen. Amateur director Charles Klein's *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1928) imitated *Caligari* by explicitly presenting its story as the vision of an insane man (**8.40**). Klein's film circulated among the newly formed art cinemas. In Rochester, New York, two film and photography enthusiasts, James Sibley Watson and Melville Webber, codirected *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928). This film's oblique narrative technique depends on the spectator's foreknowledge of Poe's story. Impressionist-style subjective camera techniques and Expressionist decor are combined in an attempt to capture the eerie atmosphere of the original (**8.41**). Watson and Webber went on to make an even more obscure story, *Lot in Sodom* (1933), replete with superimpositions, painted faces, and black backgrounds.

A few European works pushed even further in exploring narrative conventions. In 1930, the short feature

The Tell-Tale Heart



The Fall of the House of Usher

8.40, *left* The hero of *The Tell-Tale Heart* sits on the floor of his apartment, the design of which is modeled on that of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

8.41, *right* An Expressionist set, apparently depicting a crypt, in *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

Borderline

Impatience

8.42, *left* Paul Robeson in *Borderline*.

8.43, *right* *Impatience* seems to suggest a narrative situation, yet its insistent repetition of shots like this one of the woman against a blank background also forces us to see it as abstract.

Borderline was created by the group around the international intellectual journal *Close Up* (see The Spread of "Art Cinema" Institutions). Its editor, Kenneth Macpherson, directed, and the poet H. D. was one of the actors. *Borderline* centers on two couples, one black, one white, living in a small Swiss town. When the white man begins an affair with the black woman, sexual and racial tensions escalate. The film mixes objective and subjective scenes without clear-cut transitions. The African American stage actor and singer Paul Robeson played the black husband, and H. D. gave an intense performance as the jealous white woman. Dynamic compositions reflected the influence of the Soviet cinema (**8.42**), but the film was unique in its elliptical style. It remained the *Close Up* group's only completed experiment.

The Belgian Charles Dekeukeleire discovered the cinema through the work of the French Impressionists. After working as a critic, he turned to filmmaking in 1927, just as the ciné-club movement was spreading. Planning, shooting, and even processing his own footage, he made four silent experimental films over the next few years. Outstanding among these were *Impatience* (1929) and *Histoire de detective* ("Detective Story," 1930), bold films that had little precedent in any artistic tradition. *Impatience* lasts nearly forty-five minutes but consists of relentless repetitions of only four elements: a woman (alternately naked and dressed in a motorcyclist's outfit), a motorcycle, mountain scenery, and a set of three swinging abstract blocks. No two of these elements is ever seen in the same shot. Although the film seems to hint at a minimal narrative situation (perhaps the woman is riding the motorcycle through the mountains?), it simply shows us the same sorts of shots over and over (**8.43**).

Histoire de detective is even more complex. Purportedly a film made by a detective investigating why a man has lost all interest in life, it consists mainly of lengthy written passages, punctuated by banal images of the lives of the man and his wife, which add little to the intertitles. In a period when cinematic stories were supposed to be told visually, Dekeukeleire's film was widely condemned. He made one more silent film, *Flamme blanche* ("White Flame," 1931), a semidocumentary story of police brutality during a Communist party rally. Faced with an uncomprehending reaction to his work, Dekeukeleire turned to documentary filmmaking during the sound era. His two silent masterpieces, however, were indications of how far experimental films could go in defying the norms of narrative cinema.

Independent avant-garde cinema depended on the fact that silent filmmaking was relatively inexpensive. The advent of sound increased costs considerably, and even ciné-clubs and art cinemas usually preferred to show sound films. The rise of Fascism led several experimental directors to move toward political documentaries. Still, the tradition of experimentation outside commercial institutions continued, albeit in changed form, in the 1930s and beyond.

Nanook of the North

8.44 Carefully staged action in *Nanook of the North* as the hero prepares to launch his kayak and join his friends in the hunt.

Grass

8.45 A documentary spectacle as thousands of nomads brave frigid mountains in a search for pastureland in *Grass*.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURES GAIN PROMINENCE

Before the 1920s, documentary filmmaking had largely been confined to newsreels and scenic shorts. Occasional feature-length documentaries had been made, but these had not established the genre as significant. During the 1920s, however, the documentary achieved new stature as it increasingly became identified with artistic cinema. We can distinguish three main tendencies in the documentaries of this era: the exotic film, the attempt at direct recording of reality, and the compilation documentary.

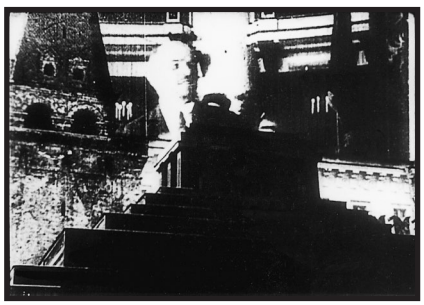
The exotic documentary came dramatically to public attention in 1922 with the release of Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*. An explorer and prospector in Alaska and Canada, Flaherty determined to make a feature film examining Inuit customs by following the life of a fictional family. Flaherty spent sixteen months in the Hudson Bay area, filming "Nanook" and the local non-actors playing his wife and son. Scenes were planned in advance, with Allakariallak (who played Nanook) making suggestions about the sorts of action to include (**8.44**). Flaherty balanced authenticity with staged scenes, as when the Eskimos build an igloo with one side open so that they could be filmed inside (**Video 8.3**).

The major Hollywood film firms refused to distribute *Nanook*, but the independent Pathé Exchange released it. It met with great success, in part because of the engaging personality of its hero. As a result, Paramount supported Flaherty in an expedition to Samoa to direct a similar film, *Moana*. He set out in 1923, only to find that the natives had adopted Western-style customs. Flaherty persuaded his "actors" to return to traditional clothing and, in order to inject drama into the film, to reenact an obsolete tattoo ritual. Flaherty had by now fallen into his lifelong habit of running far beyond schedule and shooting immense amounts of footage. *Moana* was not ready for release until 1926 and did not duplicate the success of *Nanook*. Flaherty would not complete another film for eight years.

Nanook's triumph also enabled the producer-director-photographer team of Ernest B. Schoedsack and Merian Cooper to create their first feature, *Grass: A Nation's Battle for Life* (1925). Financed and distributed by Paramount, it recorded a dangerous migration of Iranian nomads seeking pastures for their flocks (**8.45**). *Grass* was popular enough to permit Schoedsack and Cooper to make *Chang* (1928), a staged account, shot on location, of a peasant family battling dangers in their native Siamese jungle. *Chang* reflected a move toward fiction-based filmmaking, and Schoedsack and Cooper were to push their interest in exoticism completely into fiction by producing the immensely successful *King Kong* in 1933.

The documentary form was particularly important in the Soviet Union. There all three types of documentary—exoticism, recording of reality, and compilation—found expression.

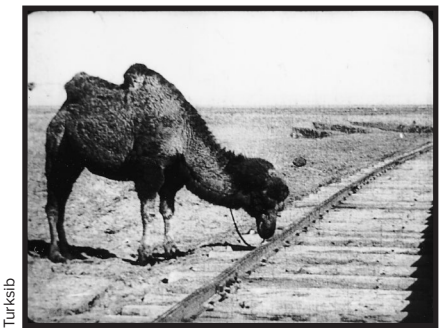
Dziga Vertov had taken charge of Soviet newsreel filmmaking during the Russian Revolution. By the early 1920s, he had formulated his theory of the "kino eye," claiming that the camera lens, because of its recording abilities, was superior to the human eye. He put this claim to the test in 1922, establishing a new newsreel series, *Kino-Pravda.* (The name was derived from the national Bolshevik newspaper, *Pravda* ["Truth"], started by Lenin in 1912.) Each installment of the newsreel focused on two or three episodes of current events or ordinary life. Vertov also, however, believed that special effects were part of the camera's superior ability to report the truth. Thus he often used split-screen effects or superimpositions to comment


Kino-Pravda

8.46 In *Kino-Pravda* (number 21, 1925), Lenin's face is superimposed in the sky above his tomb.

The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty

8.47 In *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*, Esfir Shub includes newsreel footage of the destruction of the statue of Tsar Alexander III in Moscow in 1921.


Turksib

8.48 The new railroad is used to tether a camel in *Turksib*.

on his subjects (**8.46**). Vertov also made feature-length documentaries, mixing footage photographed directly from life with special effects that conveyed ideological points (see 6.51). When sound was introduced in the Soviet Union, Vertov insisted on having a mobile recording machine that could be taken on location in factories and mines for use in making *Enthusiasm* (1931), a documentary on the First Five-Year Plan in steel production.

During this era, Soviet filmmaker Esfir Shub virtually single-handedly invented the compilation film. She had reedited foreign films for Soviet release during the early 1920s. Her real interest, however, was in documentary. She aspired to assemble scenes from old newsreels into new films. The Soviet authorities refused to give her access to such footage until 1926. Among the old reels, she found the home movies of Tsar Nicholas II, around which she based *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (1927; **8.47**). The favorable reception of this film allowed her to make two additional features: *The Great Road* (1927), on the Russian Revolution, and *The Russia of Nicholas II and Leo Tolstoy* (1928), on the prerevolutionary era. Having used much of the footage she had discovered, Shub continued her career as an editor in the sound era.

Aware of the many ethnic groups living in the new Soviet Union, directors fostered an exoticism not unlike that of Flaherty's *Nanook*. In 1929, Viktor Turin made *Turksib*, chronicling the epic construction of the Turkestan-Siberian railway. Although the film emphasized the achievements of the Soviet state, it also recorded the reactions of the indigenous peoples living along the railway's route (**8.48**). This exotic appeal made *Turksib* popular on the art-cinema circuit in the West. Similarly, in *Salt for Svanetia* (1930) Mikhail Kalatozov recorded in sparse but beautiful detail the efforts to bring salt to a remote mountain village near the Black and Caspian Seas.

The work of Flaherty, Schoedsack and Cooper, Vertov, Shub, and others would have a considerable impact during the 1930s, when the documentary format became more prominent.

COMMERCIAL FILMMAKING INTERNATIONALLY

As we emphasized in Part One, the cinema has always been an international phenomenon. Even while Hollywood dominated world markets and some countries developed distinctive styles, hundreds of other films aimed at a popular market continued to be made annually worldwide. Some countries' industries imitated Hollywood cinema fairly directly, while a few devised recognizable (though not avant-garde) styles. Several countries that previously had only sporadic production began making films more regularly, while production in some declined.

Japan

One of the most powerful studio systems grew up in Japan, where filmmakers forged a distinctive style. The first studios were built during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Japan's victory in the conflict established it as a world power. Soon industrial growth intensified. Japan supplied the warring nations of Europe with matériel and began dominating Asia with consumer goods. US films entered the market, but Japanese audiences, though fond of American films, preferred the domestic product and sustained local production.

The two most powerful companies were Nikkatsu and Shochiku. Nikkatsu (short for Nippon Katsudo Shashin) was organized in 1912 out of several smaller firms.

Shochiku was founded in 1920 by two brothers who ran a conglomerate of kabuki theaters and vaudeville houses. Both Nikkatsu and Shochiku were vertically integrated, owning distribution companies and theaters. The industry gained a professional identity by forming a trade association and by publishing a film magazine, *Kinema Jumpo* ("Movie Times").

In September 1923, an earthquake devastated Tokyo, but the movie business emerged stronger than before. In rebuilding theaters, exhibitors expanded and modernized them. Japanese exhibitors profited from American imports.

Shooting a feature in two weeks or less, Shochiku, Nikkatsu, and dozens of smaller studios pumped out 600 to 800 films per year. By 1928, Japan was producing more films than any other country, a position it would hold for a decade and reassume after World War II. Production was sustained through tight vertical integration, the big firms' investments in other entertainment businesses, and an eager urban audience.

As in other countries, the earliest Japanese features drew upon indigenous theater. The two major genres were the *jidai-geki*, or historical film, and the *gendai-geki*, or the film of contemporary life. Jidai-geki borrowed heavily from the kabuki theater, particularly in the swordfight films (*chambara*) featuring bold samurai and acrobatic action. Gendai-geki films were typically melodramas of romance or family life, influenced by the *shimpa* theater, which was modeled on nineteenth-century European drama. All genres adhered to the kabuki convention of having women's roles played by men.

Film exhibition also bore the marks of traditional theater. Exhibitors had to compete with kabuki performances, which consumed half a day or more. Movie programs in the largest cities tended to be long, sometimes running over five hours. In addition, all films were accompanied by a commentator, the *katsuben* or *benshi*. Standing near the screen, the benshi (usually a man) would explain the action, imitate the dialogue of all the characters, and comment on their behavior. Carrying on the tradition of onstage narrators in kabuki and puppet theater, the benshi added the excitement of live performance to the film show. Some benshi became stars, attracting audiences regardless of what film was playing.

After World War I, companies cast off theatrical traditions and started to modernize their films. In the early 1920s, women began playing female parts. The fast-paced US imports encouraged directors to break with the predominant long-shot style. Directors adopted Hollywood continuity principles, and close-ups and shot/reverse-shot editing became widespread. The jidai-geki directors, notably Masahiro Makino, intensified action sequences by using American-style rapid editing. Some directors, such as Kaoru Osanai and Minoru Murata in their *Souls on the Road* (1921), blended theatrical performance with more American-style cutting and flashback construction.

New genres sprang up as well. With the modern reconstruction of Tokyo after the 1923 earthquake, the urban comedy of manners became an important genre. American imports also accelerated modernization, as when Yutaka Abe modeled *Woman Who Touched the Legs* (1926) on Lubitsch's *The Marriage Circle* (1924). A genre of *sarariman* ("salaryman") comedies portrayed the tribulations of the downtrodden company employee trying to succeed.

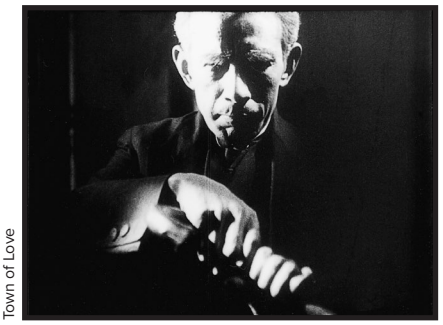
The few films that survive from this period indicate that, despite low budgets, Japan's studios created one of the world's most innovative cinemas. Kinugasa's *A Page of Madness* (see The Blending of Stylistic Traits p. 147) represents an experimental extreme, but mainstream films also displayed great pictorial dynamism. Swordfight scenes relied on fast-motion, abrupt cutting, hand-held camera movements, and carefully choreographed swordplay (**8.49**); and many films flaunted deep-space compositions and striking angles and lighting (**8.50**). The imaginative storytelling and style pioneered in the 1920s would be elaborated in the outstanding accomplishments of Japanese cinema in the following decade.

Great Britain

In the postwar years, the British film industry also optimistically set out to compete with Hollywood, largely by imitating its methods. Pioneer producer-director Cecil Hepworth expanded his company in 1919, and a few other important firms, such as Stoll and Ideal, both formed during the war, made ambitious films that they hoped would be released in the United States. Among these, Hepworth was the main figure making distinctively British films. As he put it, "It was always in the back of my mind from the very beginning that *I was to make English pictures, with all the English countryside for background and with English atmosphere and English idiom throughout.*"[6] His own favorite was *Comin' Thro' the Rye* (1924), which exploited the beauties of the English countryside to tell an old-fashioned love story (**8.51**). Despite its location photography, however, the film proved unable to compete with the livelier Hollywood films that still commanded around 90 percent of British screen time. Shortly after its completion, Hepworth's firm was bankrupt, and he turned

Komatsu Riyuzo

8.49 Dyamic swordfighting in *Komatsu Riyuzo* (1930).


Town of Love

8.50 The blind factory owner in *Town of Love* (1928, Tomotaka Tasaka) is given hard crosslighting.

Comin' Thro' the Rye

8.51 The rye field Hepworth planted for *Comin' Thro' the Rye*. Its cycle, from plowing to harvesting, creates a bucolic background for key scenes of the central love story.

to running a film laboratory. As we have seen, the young man who would become England's most famous director, Alfred Hitchcock, was making films that were more European than British in style (see The Blending of Stylistic Traits p. 147).

Other British filmmakers, imitating Hollywood films but unable to command the high budgets of American productions, also found it difficult to compete. By the mid-1920s, production slumped. Finally, in 1927, the government passed a quota to support British production. Investment picked up slowly in the last years of the decade, though the expenses connected with the introduction of sound in 1929 set the recovery back somewhat. The growth of the British industry into a mature studio system would occur during the 1930s.

Italy

A somewhat similar situation existed in Italy after the war. Initially, producers tried to revive the glory days of Italian prewar production, mostly by relying on the formulas of that period. Expensive costume pictures remained a staple. In 1923, the Unione Cinematografica Italiana (UCI), a large firm started four years earlier, produced a lavish remake of the 1913 hit *Quo Vadis?* Drawing on tactics associated with the budding Film Europe movement, UCI brought in a German to codirect with Gabriellino D'Annunzio. A German cinematographer was also imported, and the cast was multinational (**8.52**). The film's lukewarm reception suggested that epics would not regain Italy its former glory. Further attempts were made, however. In 1924, one of the most important Italian directors, Augusto Genina, made *Cirano di Bergerac*, from Edmond Rostand's play *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The producers took the unusual step of adding hand-stenciled color to the entire lengthy feature (**Color Plate 8.1**). Another genre prominent in this period was the strongman film, such as *Maciste all'inferno* ("Maciste in Hell," 1926).

The competition from American and other imported films was too great, however. During the early 1920s, Italian films made up only 6 percent of those screened. In 1926, output sank to a mere twenty features.

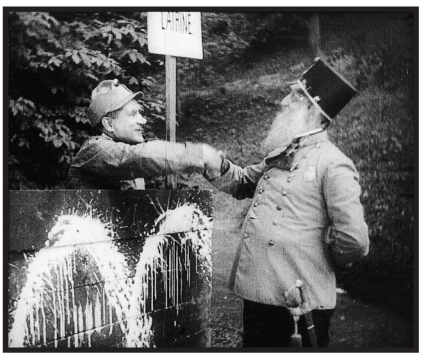
In 1922, the government was taken over by the Fascist party, whose leader, Benito Mussolini, considered the cinema "the strongest weapon" of the state. In 1923, the government formed L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa (LUCE) to make documentaries. Fiction films responded little to the Fascist regime, however, until the 1930s.

One notable event occurred at the end of the silent era. Alessandro Blasetti, the leader of a group of young critics and theorists who opposed the continued reliance on old formulas, made his first film, *Sole* ("Sun") in 1929. For this tale of the reclamation of marshes for farmland, Blasetti drew heavily on influences from Soviet Montage films and other European avant-garde cinema. The brief surviving portion displays rapid editing for maximum conflict, subjective techniques, and unusual camera angles, all combined with dazzling photography of the marshland settings. Blasetti's film received considerable praise as the first major Fascist fiction film. During the next few years, when the introduction of sound and increasing government support revived Italian filmmaking, he became one of Italy's most important directors.

Some Smaller Producing Countries

A number of countries began producing on a more stable basis. Often their films were inexpensively made and

Quo Vadis?



The Good Soldier Schweik

8.52, *left* German Emil Jannings—one of the foreign actors imported for *Quo Vadis?*—as Nero.

8.53, *right* The bumbling hero of *The Good Soldier Schweik* stands to attention after squatting in an open-air latrine. A passing officer awards him a medal, prompting him to comment, "This shows that, no matter where, luck can smile on a soldier."

Curro Vargas

8.54, 8.55 *Curro Vargas* mixes picturesque exterior locales with interior sets built on old-fashioned open-air stages, as when the hero moves from the street to a starkly sunlit room.

designed primarily for the domestic market. Such industries continued to draw heavily on national literature and to use local scenery and customs to set their films apart from the dominant Hollywood product.

For example, although films had regularly been made in Czechoslovakia since 1908, the first well-equipped filmmaking studio was not built until 1921. In 1924, actor-director Karel Lamač constructed a second, the Kavalírka studios. Here Lamač made *The Good Soldier Schweik* (1926), which helped create a national film tradition. It was based on Jaroslav Hašek's popular satire on militarism: Lamač chose a few episodes from the sprawling tale and found an actor who resembled the Schweik of the original illustrations (**8.53**).

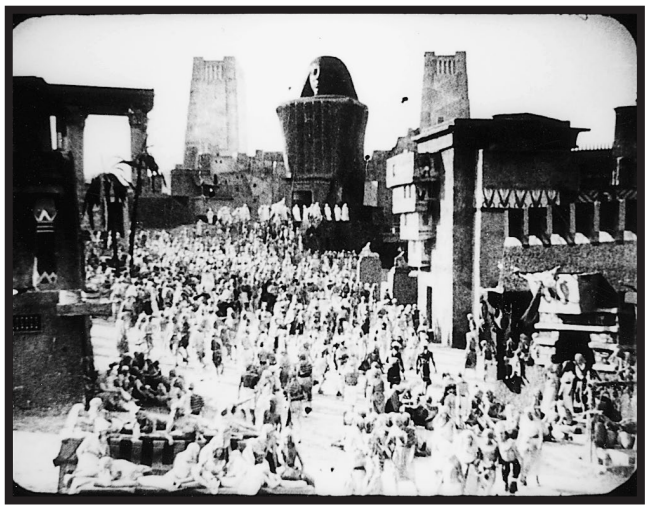
Spanish cinema also expanded slightly during this period. During the 1910s, Spanish films were usually adaptations of plays. Small firms came and went, as investors dabbled in producing a film or two. During the 1920s, longer lasting filmmaking companies formed, notably Film Española. Among its most prolific and popular directors was José Buchs. His *Curro Vargas* (1923), a costume picture set in the nineteenth century, typifies small national film production (**8.54**, **8.55**). Spanish audiences enjoyed seeing locally made films, and production rose to fifty-nine features in 1928. The coming of sound, however, temporarily brought the industry to a virtual standstill.

Production was even more sporadic in Belgium, but a few small companies made occasional features. In 1919, André Jacquemin formed a firm, Le Film Cinématographique Belge, which produced the feature *Le Portrait de l'amiral* (1922, directed by François Le Forestier). Adapted from a Belgian novel, the film used local settings to enhance its appeal (**8.56**). Although this film was aimed mainly at the domestic audience, it also did well in other French-speaking markets.

Occasionally, a firm in a smaller producing country would make a big-budget costume picture in order to break into the world market. The Austrian producer Alexander Joseph "Sascha" Kolowrat-Krakowsky took this tack. He had formed the Sascha firm in 1914. In 1918, Kolowrat visited the United States to study production methods. He

Le Portrait de l'amiral

8.56 Location shooting in Brussels in *Le Portrait de l'amiral*.



8.57 An Egyptian crowd scene in *Die Sklavenkönigin.*

decided that making spectacles was the way to succeed in the Austrian and even the US markets. He produced two big-budget spectacles, *Sodom and Gomorrah* (1922) and *Die Sklavenkönigin* (*Moon of Israel*, 1924), both directed by Hungarian Mihály Kertész. (By the end of the decade, he would go to work in Hollywood under the name Michael Curtiz, directing many films, including *Casablanca*.)

Die Sklavenkönigin was a typical epic designed for international appeal. Based on an adventure novel by H. Rider Haggard, it highlighted crowds of extras and large sets (**8.57**), as well as impressive special effects depicting Moses parting the Red Sea. Such films occasionally succeeded on world markets, but they were not enough to form the basis for regular production in a minor industry.

The introduction of sound at the end of the decade massively altered many countries filmmaking, sometimes adversely, sometimes positively.

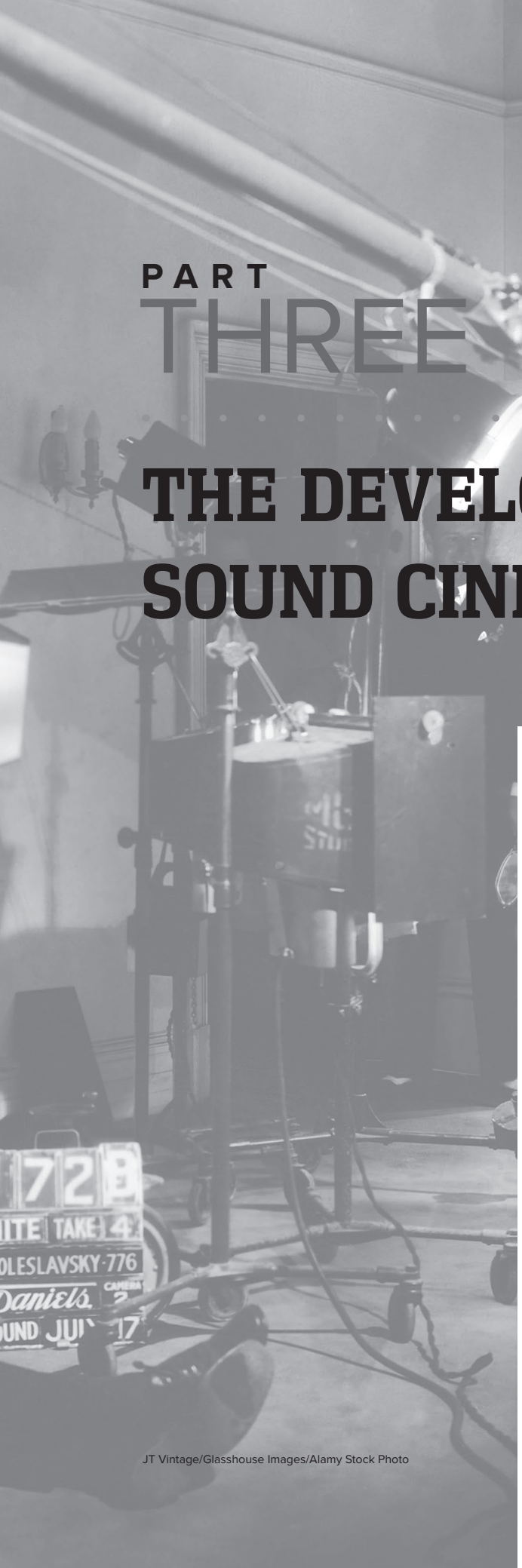
REFERENCES

1. C. de Danilowicz, "Chez Erich Pommer," *Cinémagazine* 4, no. 27 (4 July 1924): 11.
2. Richard Abel, *French Film: The First Wave, 1915–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 239ff.
3. Quoted in Walter Schobert, *The German Avant-Garde Film of the 1920's* (Munich: Goethe-Institut, 1989), p. 10.
4. Quoted in Rudolf E. Kuenzli, *Dada and Surrealist Film* (New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1987), p. 5.
5. Quoted in Patrick Waldberg, *Surrealism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, n.d.), pp. 24–25.
6. Cecil Hepworth, *Came the Dawn: Memories of a Film Pioneer* (London: Phoenix House, 1951), p. 144. Emphasis in original.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art:*
On a 1925 Japanese martial-arts film: "Bando on the run"

PART
THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND CINEMA, 1926–1945



JT Vintage/Glasshouse Images/Alamy Stock Photo

Two major social upheavals dominated the period from 1930 to 1945: the Great Depression and World War II.

On October 29, 1929—Black Tuesday—the Wall Street Crash signaled the beginning of the Depression in America. The slump quickly spread to other countries and lasted through most of the 1930s. Countless workers lost their jobs, banks failed in record numbers, farms were foreclosed, manufacturing declined, and currencies plunged in value. Fierce competition on international markets shattered the cooperative spirit that had been developing among European countries during the 1920s.

These economic disturbances took place in a threatening political climate. Italy had had a Fascist government since 1922. In 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany, instituting the Nazi regime. The Japanese government was also moving to the extreme right and asserted its imperialist goals by invading Manchuria in 1931. In many countries, socialist parties' resistance to the spread of Fascism led to political polarization.

The United States and its Western European allies tried to appease Hitler, but Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, precipitated World War II. The German-Italian-Japanese Axis powers would battle the United States, Western European countries, and other Allies until 1945. Although the war caused massive destruction in some parts of the world, it boosted the US economy, as the country recovered from the Depression partly by expanding its armaments industry.

The spread of sound in the cinema coincided with the early years of the Great Depression. Warner Bros. had successfully added music and sound effects to some of its films in 1926 and 1927. By 1929, sound had been adopted throughout the American studios, and theaters were quickly being converted. During that same year, early American sound films were enjoying long runs in European capitals.

Inventors in several countries had been working simultaneously on sound systems, and sound was introduced in various ways around the world. Crude sound equipment initially rendered many films static and talky. From the beginning, however, resourceful filmmakers injected visual and auditory interest into their sound pictures (Chapter 9).

During the 1930s, most of the big Hollywood companies encountered financial difficulties; some went bankrupt. Nevertheless, they continued to make hundreds of films a year and to develop new technologies and genres (Chapter 10).

Sound boosted some national film industries. Britain built up a studio system that imitated Hollywood's. Japan developed its own variant of the Hollywood system and managed to control its domestic market. India's already healthy production sector grew during the 1930s by offering its diverse population films in regional languages and containing musical sequences (Chapter 11).

The authoritarian regimes of the period, both right-wing and left-wing, led some governments to take control of entire film industries. The Soviet Union completed its consolidation of its nationalized industry, instituting strict policies for subject matter and style. The Nazis moved more circumspectly but also gradually absorbed the German film business and installed strict censorship. The Italian government adopted a different approach, offering financial incentives to film companies and encouraging them to provide the public with light entertainment (Chapter 12).

The French cinema remained in its ongoing crisis. Its patchwork of small production companies did not form a coherent studio system. Some individual filmmakers created a lyrical style known as Poetic Realism. During the middle of the decade, leftists made optimistic films in support of the short-lived Popular Front government. Once the war began, however, Germany quickly overran much of France, and French filmmakers who did not go into exile found themselves working under the tight control of Nazi occupiers (Chapter 13).

The growing power of Fascist regimes resulted in a move toward political documentary in Western countries, where some governments sponsored factual films. A few experimental filmmakers were able to continue working independently, creating works that remained relatively outside mainstream cinema (Chapter 14).

1.1 *Faust aux Enfers* (*The Damnation of Faust,* 1903)

2.1 An unidentified Pathé film, e. 1905

2.2 *Jephtah's Daughter* (1909)

2.3 *La Fille du Margrave* ("Margrave's Daughter," 1912)

2.4 *The Will* (1912, Éclair)

2.5 An unidentified Urban-Eclipse film, e. 1907

5.1 **"Berlin Street Scene" 1913, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.** Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images

6.1 **El Lissitzky's 1919 Constructivist composition, "Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge."** Universal History Archive/Getty Images

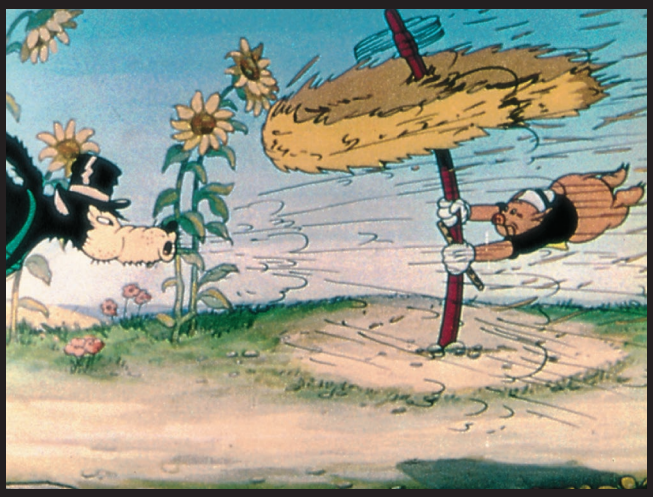
8.1 **Cirano di Bergerac**

10.1 ***Under a Texas Moon*** **(1930)**

10.2 ***La Cucaracha***

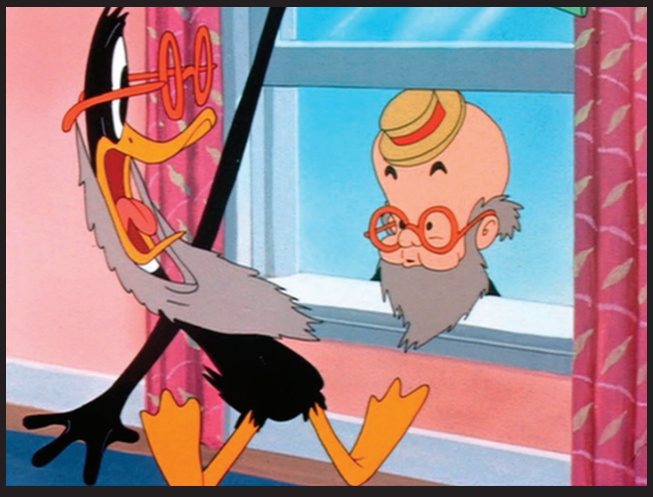
10.3 ***Becky Sharp***

10.4 *Meet Me in St. Louis*



10.5 *The Three Little Pigs*

10.6 *Bambi*

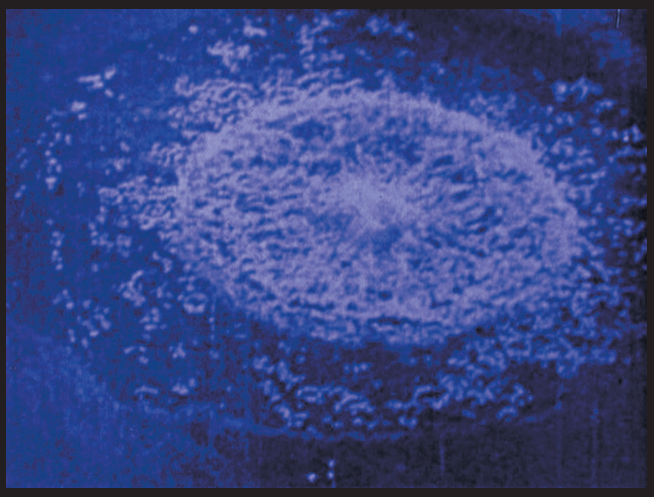


10.7 *Draftee Daffy*

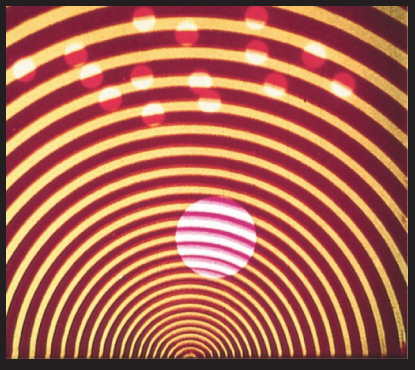
10.8 *Thugs with Dirty Mugs*

11.1 *Henry V*

14.1 *Rose Hobart*

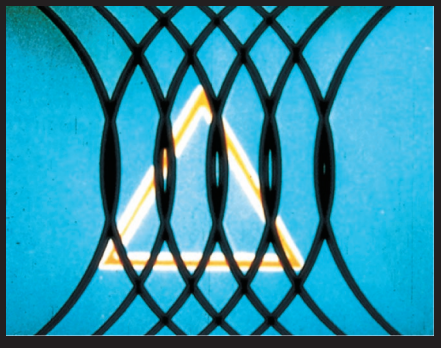


14.2 *Rose Hobart*

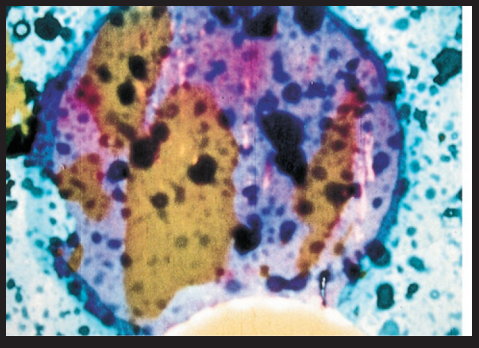


14.3 *Circles*

14.4 *Rainbow Dance*



14.5 *Escape*



14.6 *Abstraction #2* (1939–46)

15.1 *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1952)

15.2 *King-Sized Canary*

15.3 *Fast and Furry-ous*

15.4 *One Froggy Evening*

15.5 *Alice in Wonderland*

15.6 *Rio Bravo*

15.7 *Written on the Wind*

15.8 *Imitation of Life*

15.9 *On the Town*

15.10 *The Ten Commandments*

15.11 *The Searchers*

15.12 *Vertigo*

15.13 *Rear Window*

15.14 *Rear Window*

15.15 *Rebel Without a Cause*

16.1 *The Damned*

16.2 *The Rise to Power of Louis XIV*

17.1 *The Golden Coach*

17.2 *Black Narcissus*

18.1 *An Autumn Afternoon*

18.2 *The Fall of Berlin*

18.3 *Liliomfi*

18.4 *Red Detachment of Women*

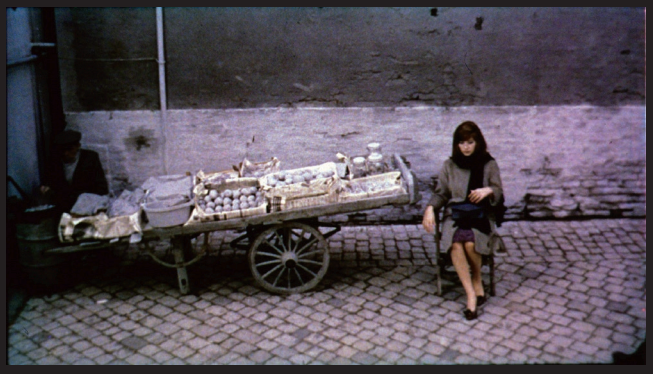
18.5 *Two Stage Sisters*

19.1 *That Obscure Object of Desire*

19.2 *Fanny and Alexander*

19.3 *Kagemusha*

19.4 *Amarcord*



19.5 *Red Desert*

19.6 *Red Desert*

19.7 *Lancelot du Lac*

19.8 *L'Argent*

19.9 *Parade*

20.1 *Contempt*

20.2 *Out 1*

20.3 *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort*

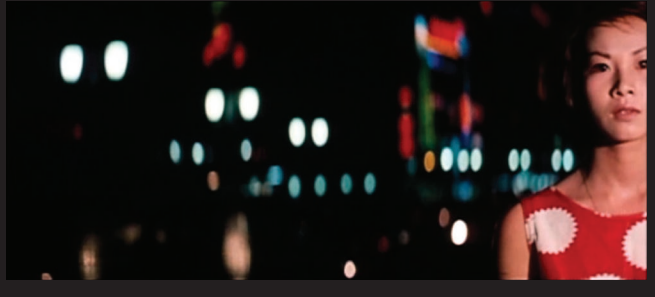
20.4 *Blood and Black Lace*

20.5 *For a Few Dollars More*

20.6 *Dracula* (aka *The Horror of Dracula,* 1958)

20.7 *Daisies*

20.8 *Innocence Unprotected*

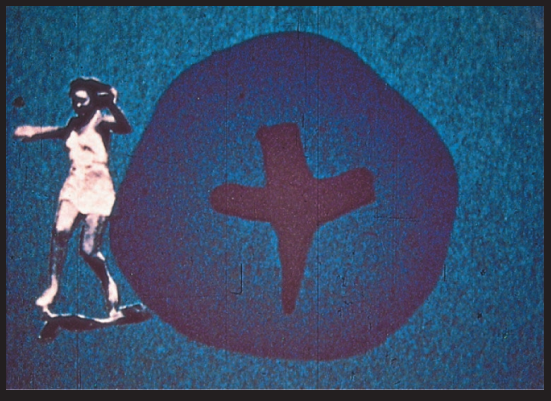


20.9 *Cruel Story of Youth*

20.10 *Tokyo Drifter*

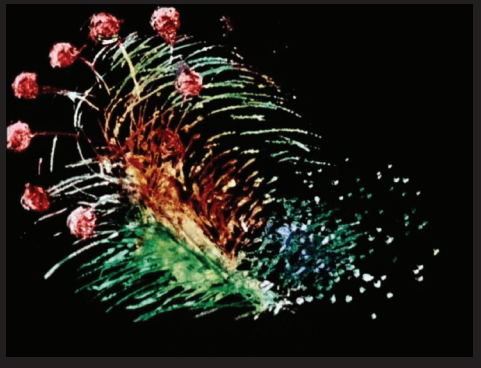
20.11 *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*

21.1 *No. 5* **(1950, Harry Smith)**

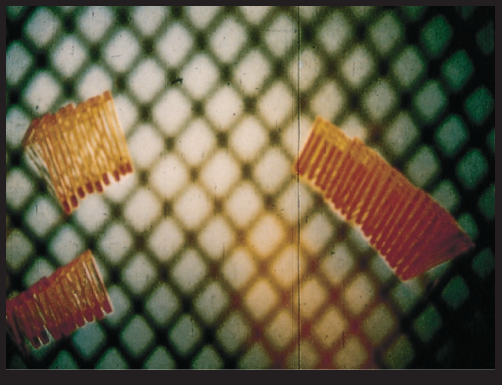


21.2 *The Long Bodies*

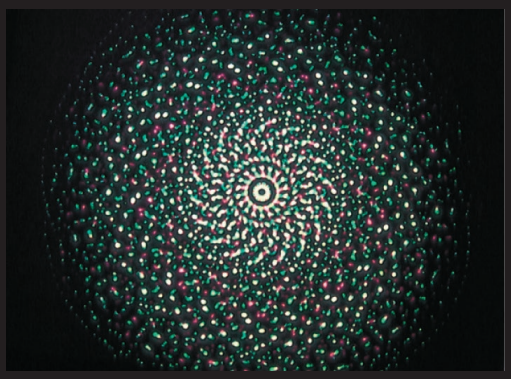
21.3 *Copycat*



21.4 *Blinkety Blank*



21.5 *Lapis* **(1966, James Whitney)**



21.6 *Allures* **(1961, Jordan Belson)**

21.7 *Bridges Go Round*

21.8 *REcreation*

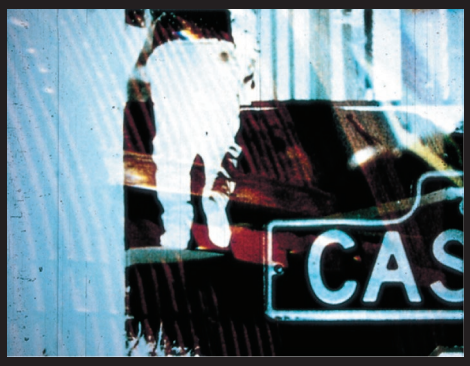
21.9 *Fist Fight*

21.10 *The Hand*

21.11 *The Wonder Ring*

21.12 *The Riddle of Lumen*

21.13 *La Peau de chagrin* **(1960, Vladimir Krist)**

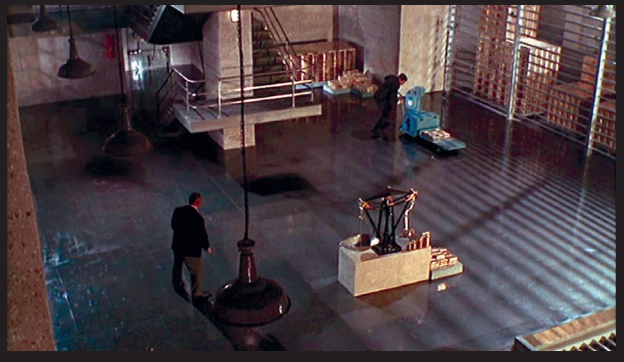


21.14 *Castro Street*

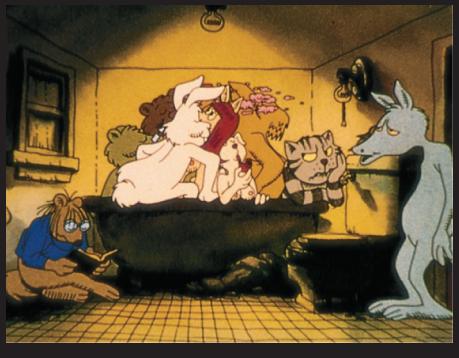
21.15 *Hold Me While I'm Naked*

21.16 *Chelsea Girls*

22.1 *The Ladies' Man*



22.2 *Goldfinger*



22.3 *Fritz the Cat*

22.4 *Chinatown*

JT Vintage/Glasshouse Images/Alamy Stock Photo

CHAPTER 9

THE INTRODUCTION OF SOUND

M/Nero-Film AG

Most silent films were accompanied by live music, ranging from a piano or an organ to a full orchestra. Sound effects were roughly matched to the screen action. In addition, from the cinema's beginning, inventors attempted to join the image to mechanically reproduced sound, usually on phonograph records. These systems had little success before the mid-1920s. Sound and image proved difficult to synchronize, and amplifiers and loudspeakers were inadequate for theater auditoriums.

The introduction of synchronized sound is often dated from 1927, when Warner Bros. released the enormously successful *The Jazz Singer*. But the process of inventing and disseminating sound technology occurred at different rates in different countries and involved many competing systems and patents.

Sound also affected style. Some critics and directors feared that extensive dialogue scenes in adapted plays would eliminate the flexible camera movements and editing of the silent era. Most filmmakers soon realized, however, that sound, used imaginatively, offered a valuable new stylistic resource. In 1933, Alfred Hitchcock commented on the difference between musical accompaniment for silent films and musical scores in sound films: "I was greatly interested in music and films in the silent days, and I have always believed that the coming of sound opened up a great new opportunity. The accompanying music came at last entirely under the control of the people who made the picture."[1] Now sound and image could be combined in predictable ways during production.

SOUND IN THE UNITED STATES

Of the three countries that dominated the world's conversion to sound—the United States, Germany, and the USSR—the US film industry was the first to move successfully into sound production. Film executives had long anticipated the introduction of sound. But which system would be technically viable and profitable? Several alternatives were put on the market.

Lee de Forest first demonstrated his Phonofilm in 1923. This *sound-on-film* process converted sound into light waves reproduced on a photographic strip running alongside the images on regular 35 mm film (see the left edge of 9.8). This system offered synchronization advantages. If the film broke and was repaired, the same number of frames of image and sound would be cut out. Because de Forest was determined to be independent, his company remained small, though the sale of Phonofilm patent rights abroad promoted the spread of sound in some countries.

During the 1910s and early 1920s, Western Electric, a subsidiary of one of the world's largest companies, American Telephone & Telegraph, was developing recording systems, amplifiers, and loudspeakers. Heavily funded researchers combined these components so that sound on phonograph records could be kept in satisfactory synchronization with the images. In 1925, Western Electric marketed its *sound-on-disc* system, but most Hollywood studios were too cautious to adopt it.

Warner Bros. and Vitaphone

The Western Electric system was offered at a time when the small firm of Warner Bros. was expanding. Using Wall Street financing, Warner Bros. invested in distribution facilities and theaters, trying to become vertically integrated. It also created a radio station in Los Angeles to promote its films. The radio equipment came from Western Electric, which also managed to interest Sam Warner in its film recording system.

Initially Warner considered sound a cost-cutting substitute for live entertainment on film programs. By recording vaudeville acts and using orchestral accompaniment for features, they could save on labor in their own theaters and offer similar savings to other exhibitors. They signed major singers, comics, and other performers to exclusive contracts. Warner Bros. tested the Vitaphone process in a series of short films. The first public screening, on August 6, 1926, began with eight shorts, including a speech by Will Hays and an opera aria. The feature, *Don Juan* (Alan Crosland), starring John Barrymore, had recorded music but no dialogue. The showing was successful, and Warners made more shorts and features with music.

On October 6, 1927, *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland) premiered. Most sequences had only orchestral accompaniment, but in four scenes vaudeville star Al Jolson sang and even spoke briefly ("You ain't heard nothin' yet"). The film's phenomenal success suggested that sound might provide more than a cheap way of reproducing stage acts and music. Warners made more "part-talkies," and in 1928 the first "all-talkie," *The Lights of New York* (Bryan Foy), became another hit.

Sound-on-Film Is Adopted

Warner Bros. was first into the field of sound, but another firm was a close second. As Western Electric was developing its sound-on-disc system, two engineers, Theodore Case and Earl Sponable, created a sound-on-film system, partly based on de Forest's Phonofilm. Fox Film Corporation invested in the Case-Sponable system. Like Warners, Fox was a small but expanding company that hoped sound would give it a competitive advantage. Fox renamed the Case-Sponable system Movietone and demonstrated it in 1927 with short films of vaudeville acts and musical numbers. The showing was a success, but Fox soon found that most big-name theatrical talent had signed contracts with Warner Bros. Fox then concentrated on sound newsreels, including highly popular coverage of Charles Lindbergh's solo flight to Paris. Fox used a Movietone musical score for F. W. Murnau's 1927 feature *Sunrise* (see Murnau and His Influence at Fox p. 139) and made some part-talkies in 1928.

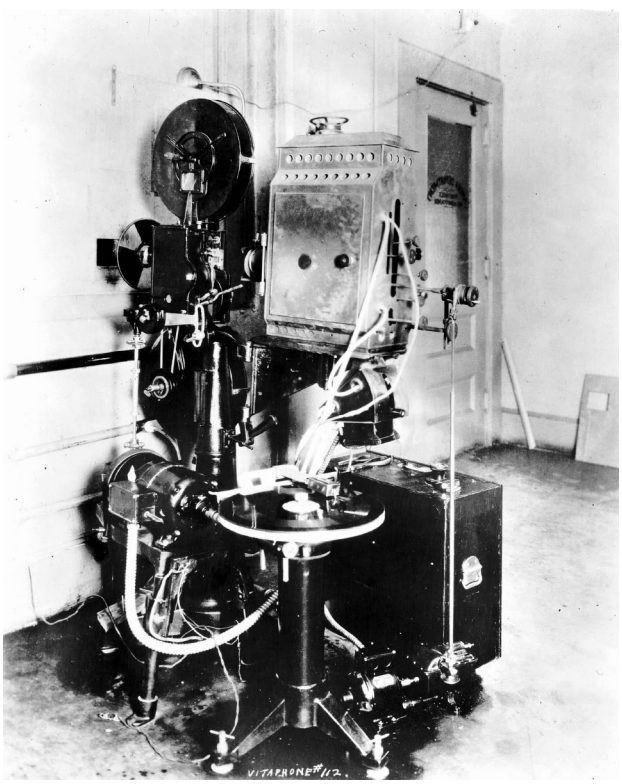
The next major system was another sound-on-film technology developed by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA, a subsidiary of General Electric and Westinghouse). Dubbed Photophone, it was demonstrated in early 1927 and for a short time promised to rival the most successful system to date, Warners' Vitaphone, in becoming the industry standard.

The five largest producing companies in Hollywood at this point—MGM, Universal, First National, Paramount, and Producers Distributing Corporation—proceeded cautiously in relation to sound. If firms acted individually, they might choose incompatible equipment. Because each firm's theaters had to show other companies' films, the lack of a common standard would hurt business. In February 1927, they signed the Big Five Agreement, pledging to act together in adopting whichever sound system proved most advantageous. The two leading choices were the

Western Electric sound-on-disc and the RCA sound-on-film systems. By 1928, Western Electric also had a sound-on-film technology available—and it offered more favorable contracts. The Big Five opted for Western Electric's system.

Because many theaters had already installed phonograph-style projectors, the Hollywood firms continued for a few years to release two prints of most films: some with phonograph discs and some with sound-on-film **(9.1).** Only Warners continued to use discs during production. In 1931, however, it joined the rest of the industry by switching to sound-on-film.

The rejected RCA system, Photophone, did not vanish. David Sarnoff, RCA's general manager, created a new vertically integrated motion-picture company. He bought the Film Booking Office, thus acquiring a distribution outlet and a studio, and he purchased the Keith-Albee-Orpheum circuit of vaudeville houses to provide a theater chain. In October 1928, Sarnoff formed Radio-Keith-Orpheum, known as RKO. Because Photophone was compatible with the Western Electric system, many theaters in the United States bought Photophone equipment, and the system enjoyed considerable success abroad.



RGR Collection/Alamy Stock Photo

9.1 Before sound on film was adapted, many theaters used projectors like this Western Electric model, which synchronized phonograph records with the film being screened.

Once the Hollywood studios decided what systems to adopt, they quickly began installing equipment in theaters. Independent theaters often used one of the cheaper sound systems. Many smaller theaters could not afford to buy any sound equipment at all, because the spread of sound coincided with the onset of the Depression. As a result, many American films were released in both sound and silent versions. Still, by mid-1932, the conversion to sound was virtually complete in the United States.

Sound and Filmmaking

Filmmakers and technology workers struggled to cope with the unfamiliar, often clumsy, new technology. Microphones were insensitive and hard to move; it was difficult to mix sound tracks; and scenes frequently had to be shot by multiple cameras in soundproof booths (see Early Sound Technology and the Classical Style p. 172).

Although many early sound films were static and full of dialogue, some filmmakers responded to the limitations imaginatively. The musical, a genre made possible by the new invention, offered opportunities for resourceful uses of sound. Even a pedestrian backstage musical such as the immensely successful *The Broadway Melody* (1929, Harry Beaumont) had clever moments. The opening, set in a block of music rehearsal rooms, creates a cacophony of different pieces being played simultaneously, as well as abrupt cuts from one sound to another as the editing moves in and out of the soundproof rooms. Another show-business musical, Rouben Mamoulian's *Applause* (1929) helped restore extensive camera movements to the sound film.

Ernst Lubitsch brought the wit of his silent films to *The Love Parade* (1929), a costume musical set in a mythical Eastern European country. In a comedy of gender role reversals, Count Albert marries Queen Louise, only to discover that he has no authority, either in his marriage or in state affairs. Although the film was shot primarily in the studio, Lubitsch avoided multiple-camera shooting in most scenes. He simply had the character complete a line a few seconds before the cut and resume speaking a few seconds into the next shot. With no dialogue carrying over the cut, sound was more easily edited.

Some musical numbers avoided multiple cameras by using the suggestive "Lubitsch touch." As the Count stands in his window singing, "Paris, Please Stay the Same," Lubitsch cuts to reverse shots showing attractive women watching him from other windows—presumably some of his many lovers. The scene switches to another window, where the Count's valet sings another verse, and we see reverse shots of maids watching him, also with romantic overtones. Then, in yet another window, the Count's

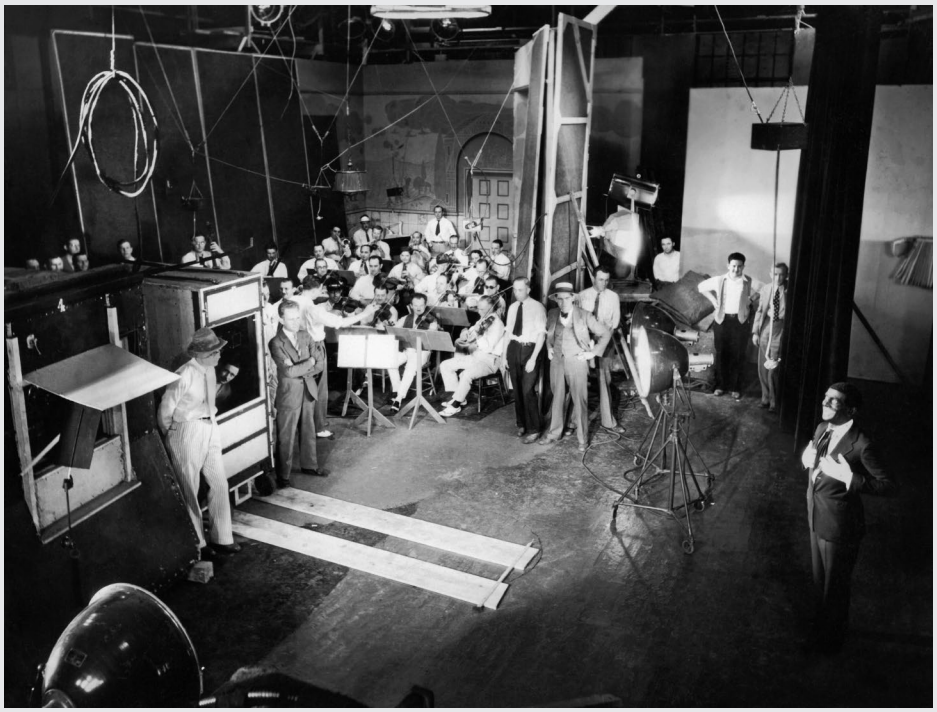
EARLY SOUND TECHNOLOGY AND THE CLASSICAL STYLE

Early sound technology posed stylistic problems for the film industry. The first microphones picked up any noise on the set. Cameras whirred as they filmed and had to be placed in soundproof booths. Moreover, initially all the sounds for a single scene had to be recorded at once; there was no "mixing" of sound tracks recorded separately. If music were to be heard, the instruments had to play near the set as the scene was filmed. The microphone's placement limited the action. It was often suspended over the set on heavy rigging, dangling over the head of the actor (**9.2**).

The photograph below shows two cameras filming a simple musical number. This technique, *multicamera shooting*, was widely adopted because each scene had to be filmed straight through in its entirety. Although it would have been easier to shoot all the action in a lengthy take with one camera, filmmakers were reluctant to surrender the flexibility and emphasis that the continuity editing system had given them in the silent era. In order to be able to use devices such as establishing shots, cut-ins, and shot/reverse shots and still match sound and lip movement smoothly from shot to shot, directors filmed the scene from a variety of vantage points. One camera might have a normal lens and make the long shot while another in the next booth made medium shots with a telephoto lens and a third filmed the action from a slightly different angle. At times, more than three cameras were used.

Even Warner Bros.'s Vitaphone shorts, which primarily displayed classical music and vaudeville acts, used multiple cameras to permit shot changes. For example, *Behind the Lines*, from the second Vitaphone program (shot in August 1926), shows popular wartime entertainer Elsie Janis leading a group of soldiers in a series of songs; the seven-minute film's action was shot straight through, using two camera positions. The finished film cuts back and forth between these two positions (**9.3**, **9.4**).

In feature films, multiple-camera shooting did not exactly duplicate silent-film style. The presence of the bulky booths made it difficult to get precise framings; in a conversation scene, for example, one shot might be taken at an angle to the characters, while the reverse shot is in profile (**9.5–9.7**). Also, because the cameras tended to be lined up in front of the scene, portions of the space often overlapped between shots (**9.8–9.10**). Incidentally, during the early years of sound, the track occupied part of the left of the rectangular frame used just for the image in the silent era. Thus many early sound films had square images (see 9.9). The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences soon recommended putting black strips at the top



Süddeutsche Zeitung Photo/Alamy Stock Photo

9.2 Al Jolson, in blackface for *The Singing Fool* (1928), is filmed from two camera booths. The orchestra is on the page playing for accompaniment. The microphones suspended above the orchestra and above Jolson carry the sound to a recording booth not visible here. The planks on the floor permit the central booth to roll toward the star for a track-in shot.

Behind the Lines

9.3, 9.4 In *Behind the Lines*, a perfect match on action as the view shifts from one camera to a second covering the scene: a soldier climbing onto a truck bed being used as a stage. Note the theatrical-style backdrop in Warners' sound studio.

The Lights of New York

9.5–9.7 In a scene from *The Lights of New York* made with multiple-camera shooting, one camera shows the Hawk and his two thugs, a second uses a telephoto lens to take a closer view of the thugs from an angle, and a third, also with a telephoto lens, frames Hawk in profile.

Hallelujah

9.8–9.10 In *Hallelujah* (1929, King Vidor), three shots show the action from similar standpoints; note how the central character is seen on the left side of the frame in the second shot and then on the right side in the third.

(continued)

EARLY SOUND TECHNOLOGY AND THE CLASSICAL STYLE, continued

and bottom of the image to re-create a rectangular frame; this *Academy ratio* (or *Academy aperture*) remained standard until the advent of widescreen ratios in the 1950s.

Other aspects of early sound technology limited filmmakers' choices. The camera booths had wheels, but these usually served to move the camera between setups. Generally they were too noisy and awkward for tracking shots. Instead, camera operators could make short panning movements through the booth windows to keep the action centered. As a result, short reframing pans became a more common stylistic feature than they had been in the silent era. The microphones initially were insensitive, and hence studios often insisted that actors take diction lessons and speak slowly and distinctly. Many early talkies move at a slow pace, and the performances seem stilted to modern ears.

Technicians worked quickly to solve such problems. Studios built padded metal blimps that silenced the camera and were far less awkward than booths. Next came microphone booms, poles that shifted the microphone overhead to follow moving sources or swing from actor to actor (**9.11**). Perhaps most important, from 1931 on it became possible to record several tracks of a scene's sound before blending them into a single final track. A musical score could be added after the scene had been shot. Prerecorded songs could be played back for singers to lip-sync during filming. Now sound mixers could smoothly combine dialogue, music, and effects. Multiple-camera shooting was no longer necessary.

Soon another innovation, "push-pull" recording, reduced hiss and low-frequency distortion while allowing even more tracks to be recorded. A scene's sound texture gained depth and density. In a restaurant, the main dialogue could stand out against a carefully controlled background of clinking silverware and softer conversations. Over the coming decades, US engineers would continue to improve film sound.

JT Vintage/Glasshouse Images/Alamy Stock Photo

9.11 Richard Boleslavsky directing *The Painted Veil* (1934). The camera is muffled in a blimp and the microphone hangs on a boom above actors Soo Young and Greta Garbo.

Significantly, some filmmakers, primarily in other countries, avoided the constrictive multiple-camera shooting system or employed it sparingly. Sacrificing the polished lip synchronization and matches on action that the Hollywood technology provided, these filmmakers shot much of their footage silent and dubbed in sound later, however loosely it fit the images. This permitted camera movements, fast cutting from a wide range of angles, and other techniques seldom used in early Hollywood sound films.

dog barks a bit of the same tune, with female dogs emerging from nearby bushes to listen.

Hallelujah (1929, King Vidor) circumvented stylistic obstacles in other ways. Vidor persuaded MGM to make a musical featuring only African Americans. No portable sound equipment was available, so roughly half the footage was filmed silent on location, with sound added later. Unhampered by booths, Vidor could move the camera freely outdoors. *Hallelujah* did employ multiple-camera shooting in some scenes (see 9.8–9.10). Even these studio scenes, however, have a distinctive quality because the actors improvised much of the dialogue, whether postsynchronized or shot directly. They often speak quickly, even interrupting each other, creating a livelier pace than that of most early talkies.

Although the studio insisted on including two Irving Berlin songs, the film's sound track emphasizes African American folk music and spirituals. The performers play banjos, kazoos, and a church harmonium. Despite *Hallelujah*'s somewhat melodramatic treatment of southern black religious and sexual mores, its attempt to deal with a milieu largely neglected by Hollywood, as well as its creative use of sound, made it significant.

Experiments in production sound were sometimes matched by innovations in exhibition. For the World War I epic *Hell's Angels* (1930), producer/director Howard

Hughes created a multichannel sound system for some theaters. The aerial battles were recorded on a separate 35 mm track, run on a dedicated projector, and sent to an extra bank of loudspeakers. The roaring airplane engines, machine-gun fire, and missile launches created a noise level about five times louder than usual. Hughes' innovation looked forward to the multichannel exhibition that would be reintroduced in the 1950s.

GERMANY CHALLENGES HOLLYWOOD

Dividing the International Pie

In 1918, three inventors came up with a German sound-on-film system, Tri-Ergon. From 1922 to 1926, they tried to introduce the process, and the giant firm Ufa took an option on it. Probably because of Ufa's mid-1920s financial woes, however, the firm did not move into sound production.

In August 1928, several international companies pooled their sound patents, including those for Tri-Ergon, and formed the Tonbild-Syndikat ("Sound Film Syndicate"), usually referred to as Tobis. A few months later, major electronics and recording firms created a second company, Klangfilm, to promote another sound-on-film system. In March 1929, the two companies merged into Tobis-Klangfilm, soon to be the most powerful sound firm outside the United States. Spurred by news of Vitaphone's successes, Ufa signed a contract with Tobis-Klangfilm and began building sound studios.

The interests controlling Tobis-Klangfilm, which included powerful Swiss and Dutch financial groups, were determined to compete with the American firms. When Warners opened its immensely successful *The Singing Fool* (1928, Lloyd Bacon) in Berlin in 1929, Tobis-Klangfilm obtained a court injunction to stop the film's run. The firm claimed that the Vitaphone equipment Warners had installed in the theater infringed its patents. When it became apparent that Tobis-Klangfilm's officials were bent on keeping American sound systems out of Germany, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) declared that all American firms would stop sending films to German theaters and stop importing German films to the United States.

This period of uncertainty slowed the German transition to sound. Producers were reluctant to make sound films, for lack of wired theaters and for fear of being unable to export to the United States. Reciprocally, exhibitors hesitated to buy expensive projection systems when there were few sound films available. The first German talkie, *The Land without Women* (Carmine Gallone) was finished in 1928, but it was not until early 1930 that sound production and exhibition accelerated. By 1935, virtually all of Germany's theaters were wired.

In the meantime, the American firms discovered that their boycotts were not working. Both Warner Bros. and RKO started paying licensing fees to Tobis-Klangfilm in order to bring their films and equipment into Germany. Tobis-Klangfilm also set up foreign subsidiaries and made patent-sharing agreements with sound firms in several countries. By obtaining further court orders to block American equipment shipped from Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere, Tobis-Klangfilm threatened to control large portions of the world market.

Soon the MPPDA and firms linked to the Western Electric system reached a settlement with Tobis-Klangfilm. On July 22, 1930, at a meeting in Paris, all parties agreed to an international cartel that would divide up the world market. Tobis-Klangfilm received exclusive rights to sell sound equipment in Germany, Scandinavia, most of Eastern and central Europe, and a few other countries. American manufacturers gained control of Canada, Australia, India, the USSR, and other regions. Some countries, such as France, remained open to free competition. Anyone distributing sound films in any territory had to pay a fee to the appropriate member of the cartel. Although there were countless patent cases and battles over high licensing fees internationally, the global sound-film cartel operated until 1939, when World War II put an end to it.

The Early Sound Era in Germany

Despite the departure of many German filmmakers for Hollywood during the 1920s, the early sound era saw a last flowering of creativity before the Nazi regime took control in 1933. Both veteran silent directors and important newcomers found imaginative ways to use sound and to retain the stylistic flexibility of the moving camera and complex editing.

The first sound film of Fritz Lang, who had been central to the German Expressionist movement of the 1920s (see The German Expressionist Movement p. 87), was one of his finest. *M* (1931) tells the story of the search for a serial killer of children. The police dragnet so inconveniences the underworld of Berlin that the criminals decide to capture the killer. Lang chose to avoid all nondiegetic music, concentrating on dialogue and sound effects. Not lingering on any one character, he used crisp editing to move quickly among many.

Far from creating static, lengthy scenes, Lang used sound to rapidly stitch together disparate actions and locales. He experimented with *sound bridges*, carrying over the sound, particularly voices, from one scene into the next—a technique that would not be commonly used until the modern

M

9.12 In *M*, as a police psychologist dictates a profile of the unknown criminal's abnormal mental state, Lang cuts to the killer's home, where he experiments with grotesque expressions in a mirror as the psychologist's voice continues.

Hollywood cinema (**9.12**). In portraying the two manhunts, Lang used sound and image to create parallels between the police and the highly organized criminal world by cutting back and forth between the two groups meeting (**9.13**, **9.14; Video 9.1**). A sonic motif also becomes an important clue: the killer's distinctive whistled tune indicates his offscreen presence and eventually leads to his capture.

Before leaving Germany, Lang also made a sequel to his 1922 *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler*. In *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* ("The Last Will of Dr. Mabuse," 1933), the arch-criminal Dr. Mabuse continues to run his gang from an insane asylum and even from beyond the grave.

Veteran silent director G. W. Pabst made three notable films in this early sound era: *Westfront 1918* (1930), *The Threepenny Opera* (1931), and *Kameradschaft* ("Comradeship," 1931). Both *Westfront 1918* and *Kameradschaft* were pacifist films, pleas for international understanding in an era when nationalism and militarism were growing in Germany. The first portrays the senselessness of World War I; the second shows German miners risking their lives to save fellow French workers after a mine disaster.

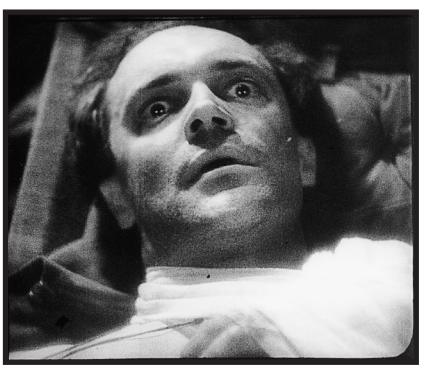
Westfront 1918 creates an antiwar stance through bitter symbolism and a realistic depiction of battlefront conditions (**9.15**). One scene shows the protagonist, Karl, coming home on leave and finding his wife in bed with the butcher's delivery boy. This scene uses many subtly varied framings to trace Karl's reactions, changing from rage to bitter resignation. Only in the wrenching final scene in a field hospital full of maimed and dying soldiers does Karl, near death, forgive his wife (**9.16**). The film closes with a title, "The End?!" accompanied by the sound of explosions. Pabst made films in France during much of the Nazi regime (see Émigrés in France p 251) but returned to Germany to work during World War II.

M

9.13, 9.14 A cut from a criminal boss gesturing during a conference to a police commissioner similarly gesturing creates an apparent "match on action" and draws a parallel between the two meetings (*M*).

Westfront 1918

9.15 An exhausted student, sent back from the trenches for help, walks past a group of soldiers preparing coffins while a shell explodes in the background in *Westfront 1918*.



Westfront 1918

9.16 The penultimate shot of *Westfront 1918* shows the dying Karl declaring he will go back to his unfaithful wife, for "we are all guilty."

Max Ophüls, a stage director, began his film career in the early sound period. His first important work was *The Bartered Bride* (1932), an entry in a favorite German genre, the comic opera. *The Bartered Bride* used several stylistic devices that would typify Ophüls's style, including deep staging, elaborate camera movements, and direct address to the audience. Ophüls's first mature work was *Liebelei* (1933), in which the innocent daughter of a violinist and a dashing lieutenant fall in love. Ophüls became known for creating an intense romanticism, especially through elaborate camera movements that swirl around the characters.

One of the most acclaimed directorial debuts of the early sound period in Germany was Leontine Sagan's *Mädchen in Uniform* ("Girls in Uniform," 1931). It deals with a sensitive girl, Manuela, sent to a private school run by a tyrannical headmistress (**9.17**). Manuela develops a crush on her only sympathetic teacher, and after blurting out her love at a party, she attempts suicide. *Mädchen in Uniform* was a rare early attempt to deal sympathetically with lesbianism.

Perhaps the most successful early sound films, both on the domestic German market and internationally, were musicals. Erik Charell's *The Congress Dances* (1931) combined lavish historical costumes and sets with elaborate camera movements (**9.18**; **Video 9.2**). Less grandiose, but no less cheerful, is *Three from the Filling Station* (1930, Wilhelm Thiele). Early on, three friends return home to discover bailiffs repossessing all their furniture. The three dance together, singing a nonsense song, "Cuckoo," and smilingly bidding farewell to each item as it is carried out; the scene is shot from a variety of vantage points. Finally the trio decide to move to the country, and they jump out the window into their car.

Like many important early sound films, *Three from the Filling Station* avoids multiple-camera shooting and moves the action out of the studio whenever possible. The filmmakers even built the set of the Kuckuck ("cuckoo") gas station twice (**9.19 9.20**). Scenes that could be post-synchronized or that used only music were shot in the outdoor set, while those that needed synchronized sound were shot in the studio.

A very different sort of musical became one of the most widely seen of German sound films. Hollywood director Josef von Sternberg directed Emil Jannings (who had worked with Sternberg in Hollywood before the arrival of talkies forced him to return to Germany) in *The Blue Angel* (1930). The film also brought world fame to stage and film actress Marlene Dietrich.

Jannings plays Professor Rath, a repressed, unpopular high-school teacher. In the first scene, street sounds establish Rath's dreary neighborhood and his morning habits. The first break in his routine is in fact a moment of silence, when he whistles to his beloved canary and

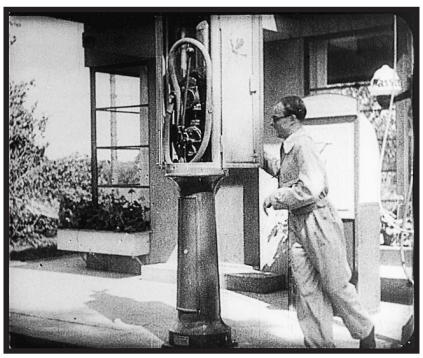
Mädchen in Uniform

9.17 The headmistress inspects the schoolgirls in *Mädchen in Uniform*.

The Congress Dances

9.18 For nearly three minutes, the camera moves with the heroine of *The Congress Dances* as she rides and sings in the streets, hailed by all as she passes.

Three from the Filling Station



9.19, 9.20 In 9.19 the three heroes dance to a prerecorded song in the outdoor gas-station set in *Three from the Filling Station*; 9.20 shows a second set for the station, built in the studio and used for recording direct sound.

The Blue Angel

9.21, 9.22 A cut-in in *The Blue Angel* maintains lip synchronization, though the scene was shot with one camera. Note that Lola's head is in a slightly different position after the cut and that Rath is holding her powder case higher. Their poses would have remained identical across the cut with multiple-camera shooting.

receives no response. The bird has died. Rath is plunged into a completely different world when he tries to catch some of his students at the Blue Angel, a sordid bar where they have gone to hear the sexy singer Lola-Lola. He falls in love with Lola himself, gives up his job to marry her, and becomes a clown in order to help earn money.

Von Sternberg avoided multiple-camera shooting almost entirely, yet he still managed to create dialogue scenes with excellent lip synchronization (**9.21**, **9.22**). *The Blue Angel* is also famous for its realistically motivated offscreen sound. A ringing bell becomes a motif associated with Rath's routinized life. When he assigns his students a punitive essay, there is silence as they write; he opens a window, and we hear a boys' choir singing nearby. Aside from its ingenious use of sound, *The Blue Angel*'s international success was due in part to Dietrich's sultry performance as Lola. It led her to a Hollywood career. There she made several important films with von Sternberg in the 1930s.

By 1933, all these German directors—Lang, Pabst, Ophüls, Sagan, Charell, and Thiele—were working outside Germany, largely because the Nazi regime had gained power (see Chapter 12).

THE USSR PURSUES ITS OWN PATH TO SOUND

While Western countries struggled with incompatible systems and patent disputes, the Soviet filmmaking establishment held back. Delegations of Soviet filmmakers traveled to Hollywood to study sound technology and production methods.

In 1929, inventors P. T. Tager and A. Shorin independently declared they had perfected their own systems. But the results were problematic, so officials ordered US equipment. Tager and Shorin improved their own versions by copying the American devices.

The first Soviet sound films appeared in March of 1930. Besides some vaudeville and musical shorts there was a feature, Abram Room's *Plan for Great Works*, a compilation documentary with post-dubbed sound using the Shorin system. At that point, only two theaters were wired for sound projection. The next release was Dziga Vertov's documentary *Enthusiasm* (1931), which used the Shorin system to record sound on location. It was followed by Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg's *Alone* (1931) and Sergei Yutkevich's *Golden Mountains* (1931). In the same year, some silent films were re-released with tracks boasting music and sound effects.

Throughout the 1930s, Soviet progress on sound film was slowed by economic conditions. The transition to sound began during the First Five-Year Plan, when the film industry was trying to become self-sufficient in all areas. Moreover, the Depression hit the Soviet Union hard; prices and demand for its principal exports, grain and other raw materials, fell sharply. A mere five sound films were produced in 1931, and the number rose to only 52 by 1939. The wiring of theaters proceeded slowly. In 1933, as the First Five-Year plan ended, only 224 of the Soviet Union's total of 27,578 cinema installations were equipped for sound projection. It was not until 1938 that sound projectors were installed in more than half of Soviet theaters. Most rural areas had to screen battered silent films on aged projectors. By the time the USSR entered World War II in 1941, the introduction of sound was still not complete.

While many Western observers resisted sound film, fearing that dialogue-ridden scripts would ruin the artistry achieved by the silent cinema, a more flexible view emerged from the famous 1928 "Statement on Sound," signed by Sergei Eisenstein, his associate Grigori Alexandrov, and V. I. Pudovkin. Indeed, they warned against sound's "unimaginative use for 'dramas of high culture' and other photographed presentations of a theatrical order." Simply filming characters talking, they asserted, would destroy the concept of Montage, which depended on abrupt juxtapositions. But they claimed that "*Only the*

contrapuntal use of sound vis-à-vis the visual fragment of montage will open up new possibilities for the development and perfection of montage."[2] That is, sound should not simply duplicate the image but should add to the image in some way. Offscreen sound could add narrative information, incongruous sound effects or music could change the tone of a scene, and nondiegetic sounds could comment ironically on the action.

The filmmakers of the Montage movement welcomed sound as a way of creating juxtapositions to affect audiences more powerfully. For example, Kozintsev and Trauberg's *Alone* had been almost completed as a silent film before they added a sound track. Rather than using simple postsynchronized dialogue and effects, they took advantage of the new technology by employing startling and contradictory sound. In one scene, the heroine makes a phone call (**9.23**, **9.24**). As cuts move us inside and outside the phone booth, we hear an inconsistent succession of sounds. Outside we hear a babble of voices and typewriters clacking in a nearby office; inside, the voices continue at the same volume level, but the typewriters are not heard. After the heroine hangs up—viewed from outside the booth—there is a sudden and unmotivated silence. At no point do we hear her voice.

Pudovkin's first sound film, *Deserter* (1933), proved to be the last film of the Montage movement. It uses sound in vivid ways. In one scene the sound track is edited very rapidly. The heroine is selling a workers' newspaper on the street; during this, a cheery nondiegetic waltz alternates with diegetic women's voices. These sounds are heard in quicker succession, until only a single note of the music and a single word are heard, passing back and forth. Another scene uses sound ironically. At an outdoor café, a desperate man on strike tries to steal food from a rich man's table. The shot of the rich man lasts for about half a minute with virtually no movement, yet loud, cheerful music plays (**9.25**). As the food arrives, the music switches to a conga rhythm for the attempted theft and the worker's expulsion. This "contrapuntal" music creates a bitter conceptual irony comparable to Eisenstein's visual treatment of the "For God and Country" sequence in *October* (6.35, 6.36).

Such experimentation with sound, however, ran counter to the official policy of Socialist Realism instituted in 1934 (see Chapter 12), and in later years sound was put to far more straightforward uses.

THE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION OF SOUND

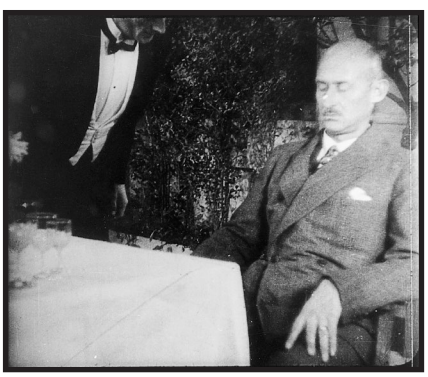
Synchronized sound movies were invented in just a few countries, but they soon became an international phenomenon. Three other countries produced important sound films in the early years. At the same time, language barriers were surmounted through dubbing and subtitles so that dialogue films could circulate around the world.

France

During the silent era, Léon Gaumont had persistently tried to devise a French sound system. In October 1928, Gaumont presented a program of sound shorts and a feature with postdubbed songs. Like the Warner brothers, he wanted to replace the live music and other entertainment that typically accompanied silent films. The early sound market in France, however, was dominated by American and German systems. Also in October, Paramount wired its first-run Paris theater and showed a short film starring the French music-hall star Maurice Chevalier. Other successful screenings, such as *The Jazz Singer* in January 1929, led to a race by French producers to make sound features. Because French studios were still being wired, the earliest, largely undistinguished, films were produced in London (including the first French sound feature, *Les*

Alone

9.23, 9.24 A scene in *Alone* that creates counterpoint by using contradictory sound sources.



Deserter

9.25 Sound counterpoint in Pudovkin's *Deserter.*

Trois masques ("The Three Masks," 1929) and in Berlin (e.g., *L'Amour chante*, "Singing Love," 1930).

Because France was an important market, German interests sought to capture part of the production sector. In early 1929, Tobis-Klangfilm set up a subsidiary, the Société Française des Films Sonores Tobis, in Paris. Tobis produced many major French films, including the highly influential first three sound features of René Clair, which we shall discuss shortly.

Uncertainty concerning sound led to a dip in French production. By 1930, however, most of the main studio buildings were wired, using either American or German systems or one of several minor French brands. Wiring theaters went on until 1934 because many were small and independently owned.

Despite the weakness of the French film industry during this period, several filmmakers experimented with the new technique. *La Petite Lise* ("Little Lise," 1930, Jean Grémillon) tells a simple, melodramatic story of Berthier, a convicted murderer released after a long term in a South American prison; he returns to Paris to find his fragile daughter, Lise, who has secretly become a prostitute.

Grémillon shot some scenes in the studio with synchronized dialogue, but he achieved variety by filming others silent, adding sound later. For example, in the opening scene at the prison in Cayenne, he cut freely among several striking exterior compositions of officers calling the roll (**9.26**). The film also makes powerful use of offscreen sound (**9.27**). Grémillon also experimented with auditory flashbacks and sound bridges between scenes.

René Clair became the most widely known of early French sound directors, as *Sous les toits de Paris* (*Under the Roofs of Paris*, 1930), *Le Million* (1930), and *À nous, la liberté!* ("For Us, Liberty," 1931) found an international audience. His imaginative use of camera movements, stretches of silence, and sonic puns helped reassure critics who believed that sound would result in static dialogue pictures. We shall see his influence cropping up in national cinemas from Hollywood to China.

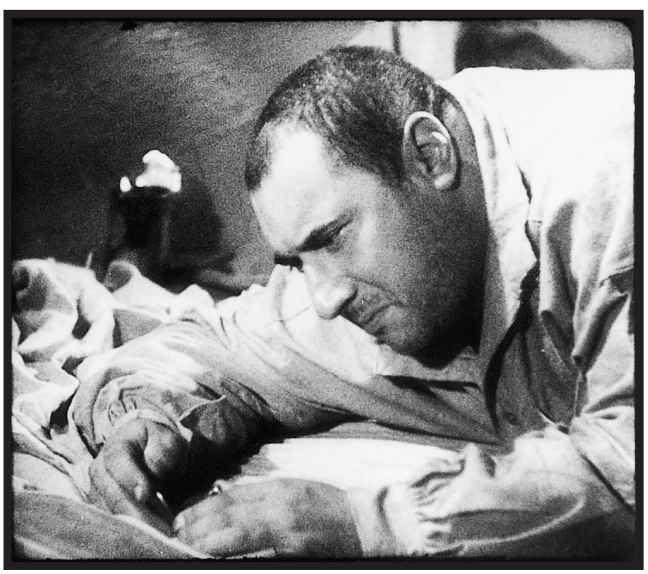
À nous, la liberté! involves two escapees from prison. Emile becomes a rich but miserable gramophone manufacturer, while Louis remains a happy, Chaplinesque hobo. The opening uses several lengthy tracking shots to show the prisoners working on an assembly line making toy horses (**9.28**). These shots establish camera movements and industrial tedium as important motifs. Later, the workers in Emile's factory are shown in similar shots of boring assembly lines (**9.29**).

Although *À nous, la liberté!* uses dialogue, it also employs music extensively—something many filmmakers favored in the early sound period. Clair also liked to surprise his audience by using the "wrong" sound for an object (**Video 9.3**). In one scene, Louis lounges in a field overlooking the factory. We hear music and singing—the sounds of nature itself, which Louis "conducts." A close shot of a flower trembling in the wind is accompanied by a soprano voice so that it seems to be singing (**9.30**).

Clair, Grémillon, and other early sound directors like Jean Renoir laid the foundations for important French trends during the 1930s (Chapter 13).

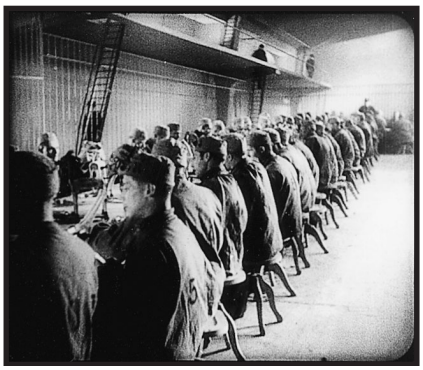
La Petite Lise

9.26 In *La Petite Lise*, distant framings eliminate the problem of lip synchronization; voices could be postdubbed in an exterior scene shot silent.



La Petite Lise

9.27 Berthier's intense longing to return to Lise is conveyed simply in a lengthy shot of him staring at her picture, accompanied by the offscreen sounds of other prisoners (*La Petite Lise*).



9.28, 9.29 René Clair uses tracking shots to compare work in a prison and in a factory in *À nous, la liberté!*

9.30 In *À nous, la liberté!* a "singing" flower's shape recalls the horns of the gramophones manufactured in Emile's factory.

9.31 By filming the policemen from the back in *Blackmail*, Hitchcock could add their dialogue to silent footage without having to synchronize the sound with their lip movements.

Great Britain

In the mid-1920s, British film theaters began imitating American practice by adding vaudeville acts and prologues to their programs. The 1928 premiere of Vitaphone shorts aroused some interest, but there was no rush to convert to sound. Even *The Jazz Singer*, in September, failed to create a stir. Jolson's next film, *The Singing Fool*, however, opened to enormous acclaim in early 1929, and the push to wire theaters and studios began.

Western Electric's and RCA's were the principal systems on the market, with Tobis and local firms filling out the rest of the market. By 1933, all but the smallest British cinemas could reproduce sound.

Production companies, the weakest segment of the industry, had more trouble coping with the expense of converting to sound. The flow of investments into the British film industry after the 1927 Quota Act (see Great Britain p. 163) had slowed. By 1929, most of the new "quota" companies were in trouble, and their problems were compounded by the fact that their recent silent films were of little value in the big first-run cinemas. The main exception to this pattern was British International Pictures (BIP), which had been founded in 1927 by John Maxwell. Maxwell quickly wired his Elstree studio facility with RCA equipment. Rather than aiming for the largely closed American market, as other companies did, he concentrated on Europe and the British Commonwealth countries. His first production, Alfred Hitchcock's *Blackmail*, was released in both sound and silent versions and was a big hit in 1929. BIP went on to make inexpensive sound films aimed at the British market, and the company remained profitable.

Blackmail was one of the most imaginative early sound films. Refusing to surrender the camera movement and rapid editing of the silent era, Hitchcock avoided multiple-camera shooting, finding a variety of other ways to work sound into his scenes. The opening sequence is a fast-cut episode in which the heroine's policeman boyfriend helps apprehend a criminal; the many shots of the police van speeding through the streets and the criminal trying to trick his pursuers were all shot silent, with only music added. Later, in the jail, the camera tracks forward behind the two police officers in another scene shot silent and postdubbed (**9.31**).

Such devices functioned mainly to circumvent the problems of early sound, but Hitchcock also uses sound to enhance the drama of *Blackmail.* For example, in one scene the heroine sees a homeless man lying with outstretched hand, in a posture that reminds her of the body of the would-be rapist she has recently stabbed to death. A

Blackmail

9.32, 9.33 A cut from one woman's back to another makes it unclear whether one or both are the source of a scream that acts as an imaginative sonic transition in *Blackmail.*

scream begins on the sound track, and a cut takes us immediately to the dead man's apartment, where his landlady is screaming upon discovering the body (**9.32**, **9.33**). In another scene, Hitchcock holds the shot on the heroine's distraught face as a gossipy neighbor babbles on about the killing. We hear the neighbor's speech subjectively, as the heroine does, with all the words becoming inaudible except the repeated "knife . . . knife . . . knife." Hitchcock would continue such deft manipulations of sound throughout his career.

Synchronized sound also provided the basis for a series of prestigious literary and historical films that British producers hoped would gain entry into the lucrative American market.

Japan

The *benshi* performer was a mainstay of Japanese exhibition, sitting or standing by the screen, explaining the action and vocally portraying the characters. Not surprisingly, the Japanese cinema was one of the last major film industries to convert to synchronized sound movies, and the process involved a protracted struggle.

Although Japanese inventors had tinkered with sound systems in the mid-1920s, the big firms displayed no interest until Fox exhibited Movietone films in the spring of 1929. Major urban theaters, particularly those co-owned by Hollywood companies, were quickly wired. By the end of 1930, most imported films were talkies.

Japanese production proceeded more cautiously. Financial problems of the Depression made the two major companies, Nikkatsu and Shochiku, reluctant to pay the high royalty fees demanded by US equipment suppliers. Japanese studios also feared that giving the Americans control of sound would lead to foreign domination of the market, so the studios devised their own sound technology. Nikkatsu's sound-on-disc system was tried on a few films, but it proved a failure. Shochiku's Tsuchihashi system, modeled on RCA's Photophone, was launched with Heinosuke Gosho's *Madam and Wife* (aka *The Neighbor's Wife and Mine*), which premiered in August 1931.

Madam and Wife is a domestic comedy that carefully integrates dialogue, music, and sound effects. A writer looking for excuses not to work is distracted by his neighbor's jazz band and the man's smoking, drinking wife. Gosho makes clever use of offscreen sounds (even mice), of subjective sound (the jazz dims when the writer puts cotton in his ears), and of thematic contrasts (the neighbor's wife is associated with jazz, while the writer's wife hums a traditional Japanese tune). The film also exploits the audience's fascination with American talkies. Invited next door, the writer staggers back home drunk and singing, "That's the Broadway melody!" His family is last seen walking home to the strains of "My Blue Heaven." Gosho shot the lip-synchronized scenes in multiple-camera fashion, but other passages were filmed and cut quite fluidly.

The popularity of *Madam and Wife* helped convince the film industry to convert to sound. In 1933, Nikkatsu allied itself with Western Electric, while Shochiku stuck with its Tsuchihashi system. Smaller firms used sound technology to break into the market: most notable were Photo-Chemical Laboratories (PCL) and Jenkins-Ozawa (JO) both of which began talkie production in 1932. On the whole, however, sound production proceeded almost as slowly in Japan as in the USSR. Sound films were less than half the feature output until 1935, and many of these had only music tracks. As late as 1936, one-quarter of Japanese films were silent.

The delay was due to several factors. Small firms could not sustain the costs of sound production, many rural theaters remained unwired for years, and, as in other countries, labor resisted the introduction of sound. In 1929, the powerfully unionized benshi went on strike at the theater premiering the Fox Movietone process. Producers and exhibitors sought to get rid of the benshi. When, in 1932, Shochiku fired ten benshi from major

Tokyo theaters, their colleagues struck and won reinstatement for them. Three years of battles followed, during which sound pictures became dominant.

In 1935, when a violent benshi strike against Shochiku was settled by police intervention, the struggle ended. Many benshi took up storytelling in variety halls or in street performances. Still, even at the end of the 1930s, one might be found accompanying a silent movie in a remote rural theater or in a neighborhood screening in Hawaii. For such remote locations, the Japanese industry was still making a few silent films.

Wiring the World's Theaters for Sound

Sound spread through the world's film theaters at an uneven pace. Some small countries, especially in Eastern Europe and the Third World, produced no films, but their few theaters were wired relatively quickly. This was the case in Albania, for example, where there were a mere fourteen theaters—all showing sound films—in 1937. Venezuela had around a hundred theaters, as well as occasional open-air shows in bullrings and similar venues; even for these casual screenings, portable sound equipment was brought in.

Silent screenings lingered on in some middle-sized markets with small production sectors. In 1937, about 800 of Belgium's nearly 1,000 theaters had been equipped for sound. Only 100 more were still considered real possibilities for wiring. Belgium produced a small number of sound films, six in 1937. Brazil had 1,246 theaters, 1,084 of which had sound capability; in 1937, it produced just four sound features.

Ultimately many of those theaters that had not bought sound systems by the mid-1930s went out of business. They had survived primarily by showing old silent films or silent versions of sound films, but these became increasingly hard to get. By the mid-1930s, sound films dominated international exhibition, as well as production in those countries that could afford it.

Crossing the Language Barrier

Sound filming created a problem for all producing countries: the language barrier threatened to limit export possibilities. Silent films could be translated through the simple substitution of intertitles, but talkies were another matter.

The earliest screenings of sound films explored several solutions to the problem. Sometimes films were shown abroad with no translation at all. Because sound was still a novelty, this occasionally worked, as when the German version of *The Blue Angel* met success in Paris. During the early sound era, Hollywood made several big *revue musicals*, such as *King of Jazz* (1929), that consisted of strings of musical numbers that could be enjoyed without a knowledge of English.

Because postproduction mixing of sound was cumbersome in the early years, dubbing a new sound track in a foreign language was clumsy and expensive. It involved, for example, rerecording all the music at the same time that the dialogue was put in, making lip synchronization difficult. Some dubbed films were successful in 1929, but others failed because the voices matched badly with the lip movements. Firms also added subtitles to some films, but these were often rejected as distracting. Other solutions, like eliminating the dialogue and substituting intertitles or even editing in narrators explaining the action in a different language, proved wholly unacceptable.

By 1929, many producers decided that the only way to preserve foreign markets was to reshoot additional versions of each film, with the actors speaking different languages in each. Advertised as the world's first "multilingual" film, the British production *Atlantic* was released in German and English (1929, E. A. Dupont). Similarly, the first German talkie, *Das Land ohne Frauen*, also appeared in an English version, *The Land without Women.* In 1929, MGM set up an elaborate program of multilingual production, importing actors and directors to make French, German, and Spanish versions of its pictures. Paramount attempted to economize by producing its multilinguals in France, purchasing the Joinville studio, near Paris, in 1929. Joinville's facilities were equipped like a big Hollywood studio, and there Paramount turned out dozens of films in as many as fourteen languages. Germany's Tobis-Klangfilm also made many multilinguals.

The assumption was that multilinguals would be relatively cheap to make because the same scripts, sets, and lighting plans could be used. As each scene was finished, a new team of actors would move in, and the same scene would be done again. The cast and crew were usually changed for each version, though in some cases directors and stars who could speak two or more languages would work on more than one version. Occasionally stars learned their lines phonetically, as when Laurel and Hardy were called upon to make Spanish versions of their films.

After about two years, it became apparent that multilinguals would not solve the language problem.

Multilingual production's main drawback was that it required so many people to be at the studio at the same time, most just waiting their turn to work. The market for each version was too small to warrant the additional expense, and audiences did not welcome minor actors in roles made famous by stars such as Gary Cooper and Norma Shearer.

By 1931, the technique of mixing separate sound tracks after shooting had been refined. The original music and sound effects could be combined with new voices, and methods of synchronizing voice and lip movements had improved. Moreover, subtitles were accepted more widely. By 1932, dubbing and subtitles enabled talkies to cross the language barrier, and these processes have remained in use ever since.

Despite its technical problems, sound boosted film production in several countries because audiences wanted to hear native performers speaking their own languages. France, for example, gained a bigger share of its own exhibition market than it had enjoyed during the 1920s. Many small countries in Eastern Europe and Latin America began producing more films. India, which during the 1920s had established an extensive studio system, now expanded its production in various regional languages. During the 1930s, its industry became one of the world's most prolific. We examine some of these results of the coming of sound in Chapter 11.

REFERENCES

1. Stephen Watts, "Alfred Hitchcock on Music in Films," *Cinema Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (winter 1933/1934): 81.
2. Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Grigori Alexandrov, "Statement on Sound," in Richard Taylor and Ian Christie, eds., *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896–1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 234.

CHAPTER 10

The Maltese Falcon

THE HOLLYWOOD STUDIO SYSTEM, 1930–1945

Follow the Fleet

In the early 1930s, the United States economy nearly collapsed. In 1932, as the Great Depression was entering its depths, unemployment reached 23.6 percent. The dollar's buying power was high—admission at some local movie theaters might be only a dime—but many people could afford only necessities.

The stock market hit its lowest level in mid-1932 just before the presidential election, and Franklin Roosevelt swept to the first of four victories by blaming the disaster on Herbert Hoover. The Roosevelt administration moved to bolster the economy. The National Recovery Administration, established in 1933, cast a lenient eye on big-business practices, such as trusts and oligopolies, while also displaying a new tolerance of labor unions. Both policies had a major impact on Hollywood. The government also fostered economic growth by financing roads, buildings, the arts, and other areas under the Works Progress Administration (WPA, established in 1935). The WPA put 8.5 million people back to work, thus building up buying power and helping industries recuperate.

Recovery was uneven. A recession during 1937 and 1938, though less severe than the original crisis, caused similar problems. By 1938, however, government intervention was pulling the country out of the Depression. The outbreak of war in parts of Europe accelerated that process.

Although the United States remained neutral until the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, armaments companies were allowed to sell abroad beginning in November 1939. America declared itself "the arsenal of democracy," selling arms to its allies around the world and then building up its own combat capability. This increased manufacturing gradually absorbed the available labor force. Although there were 3 million unemployed when the United States entered the war in 1941, by late in the war some jobs remained unfilled.

The war expanded the American economy. Between 1940 and 1944, the output of manufactured goods quadrupled. Fully 40 percent of the nation's gross national product (GNP) supported the war effort, but the newly employed workers on the home front (including many who had been housewives or servants) gained purchasing power and a higher standard of living. Despite shortages of some products, most American industries increased their sales, often by 50 percent or more. The film industry shared in this wartime boom, as movie theater attendance rose dramatically.

THE NEW STRUCTURE OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

During the silent era, the Hollywood film industry had developed into an oligopoly in which a small number of companies cooperated to close the market to competition. While the structure of this oligopoly remained relatively stable into the 1930s, the coming of sound and the onset of the Depression caused some changes.

Only one large new company was formed as a result of the coming of sound: RKO, created to exploit RCA's sound system, Photophone. Fox's successful innovation of sound-on-film led it to expand considerably during the late 1920s, but the beginning of the Depression forced Fox to cut back on its investments. Most notably, it sold its newly acquired controlling interest in First National to Warner Bros. Thus Warners, which had been a small company, grew into one of the largest firms of the 1930s.

By 1930, the Hollywood oligopoly had settled into a structure that would change little for nearly twenty years. Eight large companies dominated the industry. First were the Big Five, also called the *Majors*. In order of size, they were Paramount (formerly Famous Players–Lasky), Loew's (generally known by the name of its production subsidiary, MGM), Fox (which became 20th Century-Fox in 1935), Warner Bros., and RKO. To be a Major, a company had to be vertically integrated, owning a theater chain and having an international distribution operation. Smaller companies with few or no theaters formed the Little Three, or the *Minors*: Universal, Columbia, and United Artists (UA). There were also several independent firms. Some of these (such as Samuel Goldwyn and David O. Selznick) made expensive, or "A," pictures comparable to those of the Majors. The firms (such as Republic and Monogram) making only inexpensive "B" pictures were collectively known as *Poverty Row*. We shall survey each of the Majors and Minors briefly and then look at independent production.

The Big Five

Paramount Paramount began as a distribution firm and expanded by buying up large numbers of theaters (See The Major Studios Begin to Form, p. 56; and Vertical Integration, p. 123). This strategy succeeded in the 1920s, but once the Depression hit, the company earned far less money and owed sizable amounts on the mortgages of its theaters. As a result, Paramount declared bankruptcy in 1933 and underwent court-ordered reorganization until 1935. During that time it produced films but at a loss. In 1936, Paramount theater executive Barney Balaban became president of the entire company and made it profitable again (so successfully that he retained his post until 1964).

In the early 1930s, Paramount was known partly for its European-style productions. Josef von Sternberg made his exotic Marlene Dietrich films there, Ernst Lubitsch continued to add a sophisticated touch with his comedies, and French import Maurice Chevalier was one of its major stars. The studio also depended heavily on radio and vaudeville comedians. The Marx Brothers made their earliest, most bizarre films there (notably *Duck Soup*, directed by Leo McCarey in 1933), and Mae West's suggestive dialogue attracted both audiences and controversy.

In the second half of the decade, Balaban turned Paramount in a more mainstream direction. Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, consistently among the top box-office attractions of the World War II period, helped sustain the studio, as did tough guy Alan Ladd and comedian Betty Hutton. One of the studio's popular wartime directors, Preston Sturges, made several satirical comedies. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Cecil B. De Mille continued as a mainstay of the studio he had helped start, with a series of big-budget historical films.

Loew's/MGM Unlike Paramount, MGM did well all the way through the period from 1930 to 1945. With a smaller theater chain, it had fewer debts and was the most profitable American film firm. This was partly due to the quiet guidance of Nicholas Schenck, who managed Loew's from New York. Louis B. Mayer ran the West Coast studio on a policy of high-profile, big-budget films (supervised by Irving Thalberg until his early death in 1936), backed up by mid-range films (mostly supervised by Harry Rapf) and B pictures.

MGM's films (even the Bs) often looked more luxurious than those of other studios. Budgets for features averaged $500,000 (significantly more than the $400,000 Paramount and 20th Century-Fox were spending). Cedric Gibbons, head of the art department, helped create an MGM look with large, white, brightly lit sets. MGM boasted that it had under contract "more stars than there are in heaven." Important directors who worked consistently for MGM included George Cukor and Vincente Minnelli.

In the early 1930s, MGM's biggest star was the unglamorous Marie Dressler, remembered today mainly for her Oscar-winning performance in *Min and Bill* (1930) and her sardonic role in *Dinner at Eight* (1933). Later in the decade, Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Mickey Rooney, and Judy Garland became major drawing cards. It is a measure of MGM's emphasis on quality that Rooney, who was in A musicals such as Busby Berkeley's *Strike Up the Band* (1940), could simultaneously be delegated to the relatively low-budget, but popular, "Andy Hardy" series. Greta Garbo was more a prestige star than a box-office draw in the United States, but her films did well in Europe; once the war broke out and European markets were closed to American films, MGM let her go. During the war, new stars emerged for the studio, including Greer Garson, Gene Kelly, and Katharine Hepburn—the last teaming up with Spencer Tracy.

20th Century-Fox Partly as a result of its expansion after the innovation of sound, Fox entered the Depression in worse shape than the other Majors. The company remained in trouble until 1933, when Sidney Kent, former head of distribution for Paramount, took over and helped turn the firm around. One crucial step was a merger with a smaller company, Twentieth Century, in 1935. This deal brought in Darryl F. Zanuck as head of the West Coast studio, which he ran with an iron hand.

20th Century-Fox had relatively few long-term stars. Folk humorist Will Rogers was immensely popular up to his death in 1935; skating star Sonja Henie and singer Alice Faye were both famous for a few years. But the studio's biggest draw was child-star Shirley Temple, who topped national box-office polls from 1935 to 1938. Her popularity waned as she grew up, and 20th Century-Fox's biggest wartime profits came mostly from Betty Grable musicals. (A photograph of Grable in a bathing suit was the favorite pin up among the troops.) Major directors who worked steadily at Fox during this period included Henry King and John Ford.

Warner Bros. Like Fox, Warner Bros. had been borrowing and expanding just before the Depression began. It coped with its debts not by declaring bankruptcy but by selling off some holdings and cutting costs. Harry Warner ran the company from New York. He insisted on making a relatively large number of low-budget projects, resulting in modest but predictable profits.

As head of production, Jack Warner ruthlessly cut costs, forcing his top stars—Humphrey Bogart, Bette Davis, Errol Flynn, and others—to churn out pictures relentlessly. James Cagney, already well established by 1933, appeared in five Warner films released that year. Plots were recycled frequently (the screenwriting department was known as the "echo chamber"), and the studio concentrated on creating popular genres and then mining them: the Busby Berkeley musical, the gangster film, the problem film based on current headlines, the "bio-pic," and, once the war began, a series of successful combat films. Warner depended on prolific, solid directors such as William Wellman, Michael Curtiz, and Mervyn LeRoy to keep the releases flowing. The many Warner films of the era that have become classics attest to the ability of the studio's filmmakers to succeed with limited resources.

RKO This was the shortest-lived of the Majors. In 1928, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), unable to convince any studio to adopt its sound system, went into the movie-making business itself as RKO (see Sound-on-Film Is Adopted, p. 170). RKO always lagged behind the other Majors. By 1933 the firm was in bankruptcy, and it was not reorganized until 1940. At that point, wartime prosperity helped RKO achieve profitability, though its problems would return shortly.

RKO had no stable policy during this period, and it lacked big stars. Katharine Hepburn, for example, was popular during the early 1930s, but a series of indifferent and eccentric films labeled her "box-office poison." RKO had isolated hits, such as the 1933 fantasy *King Kong*, but its only consistent moneymakers during the 1930s were Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, whose series of musicals ran from 1934 to 1938. To a considerable extent, RKO's slim profits depended on its distribution of animated films made by an independent firm, Walt Disney.

During the early 1940s, RKO turned to adapting prestigious Broadway plays, including *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (1940). It also hired controversial young theatrical producer Orson Welles. His *Citizen Kane* (1941) came to be remembered as the most important RKO film, though it was financially disappointing at the time. During the early 1940s, RKO's B unit, supervised by Val Lewton, produced some of the most creative low-budget films of Hollywood's studio era.

THE HAYS CODE: SELF-CENSORSHIP IN HOLLYWOOD

The popular image of Will Hays and other officials of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) casts them as sour puritans imposing censorship on the film industry. The reality is more complex. The MPPDA was a corporation owned jointly by the film companies themselves. One of the MPPDA's tasks was to help *avoid* official censorship from the outside.

The MPPDA was formed in 1922 to improve public relations after a series of Hollywood scandals, to provide a lobbying link to the era's sympathetic Republican administrations, and to handle foreign problems such as quotas. Similar functions continued into the 1930s, but the MPPDA became more famous for its policy of industry self-censorship: the Production Code (often called the Hays Code).

Many believed that lax morality during the 1920s Jazz Age had been one cause of the Depression. State and municipal film censorship boards, formed in the silent era, tightened standards. Pressure groups promoting religious beliefs, children's welfare, and the like protested against sex, violence, and other types of subject matter. In 1932 and 1933, a series of studies by the Payne Fund investigated the effects of filmgoing on audiences—particularly children.

By early 1930, outside pressure for censorship forced the MPPDA to adopt the Production Code as industry policy. The Code was an outline of moral standards governing the depiction of crime, sex, violence, and other controversial subjects. Provisions of the Code demanded, for example, that "methods of crime should not be explicitly presented" and that "sexual perversion or any inference to it is forbidden." (In this period, "sexual perversion" referred primarily to homosexuality.) All Hollywood films were expected to obey the Code or risk local censorship. In enforcing the Code, MPPDA censors often went to absurd lengths. Even respectably married couples had to be shown sleeping in twin beds (to suit British censors), and the mildest profanity was forbidden. When *Gone with the Wind* was filmed in 1939, there was lengthy controversy before the MPPDA finally permitted Clark Gable to speak his famous departing line "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

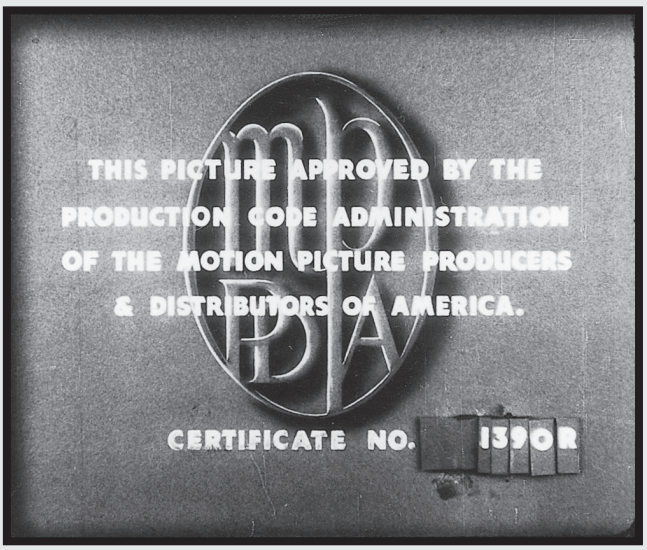
The MPPDA's efforts were initially resisted by the film companies. Most of the firms were in financial trouble, some moving into or near bankruptcy as theater attendance fell. They knew sex and violence could boost theater patronage. Gangster films and sex pictures, however, drew the wrath of censors and pressure groups. *The Public Enemy* (1931), *Little Caesar* (1930), and *Scarface* (1932) were seen as glorifying criminals. Although the protagonists were killed in the end, it was feared that youngsters would copy the tough-guy images of James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson. More notoriously, several films centered on women who traded sexual favors for material gain. *Baby Face* (1933) and *Red-Headed Woman* (1932) showed women attaining elegant apartments, clothes, and cars through a series of affairs. Even *Back Street* (1932, John M. Stahl), in which the heroine lives modestly and truly loves the man who keeps her, was found offensive. According to the Code's author, the film approved "of extramarital relationship, thereby reflecting adversely on the institution of marriage and belittling its obligations."[1]

Mae West presented a formidable challenge to the MPPDA. She was a successful Broadway performer and playwright whose fame rested on sensational plays like *Sex* (1926). Although the MPPDA fought to keep her out of films, Paramount, facing bankruptcy, hired her; for a few years, she was the company's top moneymaker. Her first star vehicle, *She Done Him Wrong* (1933, Lowell Sherman),

The Little Three

Universal Although it had an extensive distribution system and was the largest of the Little Three, Universal had constant money problems from 1930 to 1945 (and beyond). It had few major stars, and its successful filmmakers tended to move to bigger studios. Universal's early strategy was to promote new stars in visually striking horror films. The firm made stars of Bela Lugosi (*Dracula*, 1931), Boris Karloff (*Frankenstein*, 1931), and Claude Rains (*The Invisible Man*, 1933). After 1935, Universal increasingly targeted small-town audiences, building up another new star, the cheerful teenage singer Deanna Durbin. The studio relied on B series, such as the Sherlock Holmes films of the 1940s, starring Basil Rathbone, and the hugely popular slapstick films of Abbott and Costello.

Columbia Under the steady leadership of studio head Harry Cohn, Columbia weathered the Depression and remained profitable. Despite low budgets, it turned out popular films, often by borrowing stars or directors from


THIS PICTURE APPROVED BY THE
PRODUCTION CODE ADMINISTRATION
OF THE MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS
& DISTRIBUTORS OF AMERICA.
CERTIFICATE NO. 1390R

The Fountain

10.1 The seal of approval as it appeared in the 1930s at the beginning of films passed by the MPPDA.

took in many times its cost. A typical bit of dialogue occurs as the virtuous young hero chides the heroine by asking her, "Haven't you ever met a man that could make you happy?" She replies, "Sure . . . lots of times." West's drawling delivery could make any line seem salacious.

The timing of the premiere of *She Done Him Wrong* could not have been worse. The first Payne Fund studies had just appeared. Moreover, in early 1933, the Roosevelt administration took over, severing Hays's ties to Republican officials in Washington. A national censorship law seemed to be in the offing. As a result, in March 1933, Hays pushed the film industry to enforce the Code.

Still, studios hungry for patrons tested the Code's limits. Mae West's films continued to cause problems. *Belle of the Nineties* (1934) was recut at the insistence of the New York State Censorship Board. The negotiations concerning this film coincided with mounting pressure from religious groups, especially the Catholic Legion of Decency. (The legion had a rating system that could condemn films either for young people or for all Catholics. This stigma could cause the industry considerable lost revenues.)

The danger of increased official censorship was too great to be ignored, and, in June 1934, the MPPDA established a new set of rules. Member studios releasing films without MPPDA seals of approval (**10.1**) now had to pay a $25,000 fine. More important, a film without a seal was barred from any MPPDA member's theaters—which included most first-run houses. This rule forced most producers to comply with the Code. "Objectionable" material was still used, but it became more indirect. A strategic fade-out might hint that a couple was about to make love; extreme violence could occur offscreen; sophisticated dialogue could suggest much without violating the Code.

The MPPDA may have been repressive, but it blocked potentially more extreme national censorship. In practical terms, the Code was not a tool of the prudish minds of MPPDA officials but a summary of the types of subject matter that could get movies cut by local censors or banned for Catholic viewers. The Code saved Hollywood money by pressuring filmmakers to avoid shooting scenes that would be snipped out. The MPPDA did not seek to eliminate every risqué line or violent moment. Instead, it allowed the studios to go just far enough to titillate the public without crossing the lines defined by local censorship authorities.

bigger studios (thus avoiding the costs of keeping them under contract). The studio's most important director, Frank Capra, stayed there throughout the 1930s. His 1934 film *It Happened One Night* starred Claudette Colbert (loaned out by Paramount) and Clark Gable (by MGM); film, director, and stars all won Oscars, and the picture was one of Columbia's biggest hits.

Although several major directors worked briefly at Columbia—most notably John Ford for *The Whole Town's Talking* (1935), George Cukor for *Holiday* (1938), and Howard Hawks for *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) and *His Girl Friday* (1940)—they did not stay. During this period, the studio depended largely on its B Westerns, Three Stooges films, and other cheaper fare.

United Artists The sound era saw the beginning of a slow decline for UA. D. W. Griffith, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks all retired in the early to mid-1930s, and Charles Chaplin released a feature only about once every five years. UA distributed films for other prominent

independent producers such as Alexander Korda, David O. Selznick, Walter Wanger, and Samuel Goldwyn—who all switched to other firms by the end of World War II. As a result, UA was the only company whose profits fell during most of the wartime boom years.

UA's releases from 1930 to 1945 came from a batch of diverse independent producers. Prestigious British imports such as *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, slapstick musicals with popular Broadway star Eddie Cantor, a few of Alfred Hitchcock's American films (including *Rebecca* and *Spellbound*), and some of William Wyler's finest works (*Dodsworth*, *Wuthering Heights*) provided a varied output. Unlike in the silent period, however, UA now had to fill out its feature schedule with mid-budget, or even B, pictures.

The Independents

There was little real competition among the Majors, the Minors, and the independents. Each group had a different function within the industry. The Majors provided the bulk of the A pictures for big theaters. The Minors supplied the extra films needed to fill out programs and catered to smaller theaters that did not belong to the Majors. A few independent firms made prestige films, while others, like Monogram and Republic, supplied double features with B pictures, most of them Westerns, crime thrillers, and serials.

Some small independent producers were even further removed from the Hollywood mainstream, producing low-budget films for specific ethnic groups. Oscar Micheaux continued making films with black casts (See Films for African American Audiences, p. 140). The introduction of sound led to production in a variety of languages. In cities where there were large enclaves of Jewish immigrants, for example, there was a demand for films in Yiddish. While there had been silent films distributed with Yiddish intertitles, the talkies fostered a brief flowering of Jewish-oriented production in the 1930s. Films such as *Uncle Moses* (produced by Yiddish Talking Pictures in 1932) were shown in theaters that also exhibited movies imported from the two other centers of Yiddish filmmaking, the USSR and Poland. Plays from the lively Jewish theater scene were adapted. Edgar G. Ulmer, who had worked briefly in Hollywood, made one of the most internationally successful Yiddish films, *Green Fields* (1937; **10.2**). Like many films in this cycle, it centered on family crises and the clash between traditional values and modern urban life. The films featured frequent musical interludes. The outbreak of World War II crushed Yiddish filmmaking in Poland in 1939, and, by 1942, Yiddish-language production had ceased in the United States as well.

Green Fields

10.2 Ulmer adds visual interest to the low-budget *Green Fields* by placing objects in the foreground to frame the action.

Despite the limited successes of various types of independent production, it would have been virtually impossible for a new company—large or small—to gain a significant share of the film market. The Hollywood firms had created a secure, stable situation in which they loaned one another stars, played one another's films in their theaters, and cooperated in other ways. In one of their most prominent joint actions, they worked through the MPPDA to fight outside pressure for censorship of movies (see The Hays Code: Self-Censorship in Hollywood, p. 188).

EXHIBITION PRACTICE IN THE 1930s

Sound and the Depression significantly changed the way theaters presented movies. Warner Bros. initially viewed sound as a way of eliminating live orchestral accompaniment of features and stage acts in the theater. Its effort was successful, and by 1930 most theaters showed only filmed entertainment. In effect, creative control of programming had at last been taken entirely out of the hands of local theater managers, who received their complete shows in the form of films.

The Depression cut short the era of the movie palace. Many theaters no longer could afford ushers to show patrons to their seats. Seeking extra income, managers offered candy, popcorn, and beverages in the lobbies. Because many moviegoers had little to spend on entertainment, exhibitors played double and even triple features, in addition to the usual short films. The second film was often a cheap B picture, but it gave the moviegoer a sense of getting twice as much. Just as important, the double feature had an intermission during which the spectator could buy refreshments.

Managers also lured patrons with giveaways. There might be a drawing for a door prize, or a souvenir pillow might come with every ticket. Most effective were "dish nights," when each ticket came with a piece of chinaware. Families were thus encouraged to attend weekly to collect a whole set of crockery.

As attendance expanded during World War II, some of these incentives declined. B-film production was less important, but the double feature remained, as did the concession stand. Many big movie houses had deteriorated during the Depression, but they were still ready to accommodate the renewed crowds of moviegoers.

CONTINUED INNOVATION IN HOLLYWOOD

During the 1920s, the expansion of the industry had included the formation of many technical companies and studio departments. The innovation of sound, which created such an upheaval in the business, had been one result of this growth in the technological support side of the industry. During the 1930s and 1940s, advances in filmmaking continued. Through the efforts of the studios, key manufacturers, and coordinating institutions like the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, film technology became more versatile and sophisticated.

Sound Recording

Methods of sound recording improved steadily. Early microphones were omnidirectional, picking up unwanted noise from crew and equipment. Gradually, unidirectional microphones, which could be aimed specifically at the desired sound source, were developed. While early booms to hang and move the microphone above the set had been large and clumsy, lighter booms soon made recording more flexible (**10.3**). By late 1932, innovations in multiple-track recording permitted music, voices, and sound effects to be registered separately and later mixed onto one track. (Songs were generally recorded first, with the singers moving their lips to a playback.) Also in 1932, identical edge numbers began to be printed on both the image and sound negatives, permitting close synchronization even of short shots.

By 1932, the results of such improvements were apparent in many films. Actors no longer had to move gingerly or to slowly enunciate their dialogue, and the lugubrious pace of many early talkies gave way to a livelier rhythm. The new flexibility in sound recording is apparent in such disparate films of 1932 as *Trouble in Paradise* (Ernst Lubitsch), *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (Mervyn LeRoy), and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Rouben Mamoulian).

While early sound films had often avoided using much nondiegetic atmospheric music, multiple-track recording fostered the introduction of what came to be called the *symphonic score*, in which lengthy musical passages played under the action and dialogue. Several composers who were trained in the tradition of post-Romantic European classical music, including Max Steiner, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Miklós Rózsa, David Raksin, and Bernard Herrmann, wrote scores to heighten moods of romance or suspense.

RGR Collection/Alamy Stock Photo

10.3 A telescoping boom aims a small microphone directly at the actors during production of *Adventure in Diamonds* (1940).

Masheter Movie Archive/Alamy Stock Photo

10.4 The crane Busby Berkeley used at Warner Bros. to film elaborate musical numbers, seen here between takes of *Gold Diggers of 1935* (1935).

Steiner in particular helped establish the norms for studio music. His emphatic score for *King Kong* (1933) was an influential early use of the symphonic approach. Steiner also commonly quoted easily recognizable tunes to emphasize a scene's meaning, as in *Sergeant York* (1940), where "Give Me That Old Time Religion" forms a motif associated with the hero's religious faith. Like many musical techniques in the sound cinema, this quotation practice derived from live accompaniment of silent films. Composers usually tried to make the music unobtrusive. Like continuity editing, set design, and other techniques, most music was supposed to serve the narrative without drawing attention to itself.

Camera Movement

Many early sound films contained camera movements, but to execute them, filmmakers often had to shoot silent and add sound later or try to move the bulky camera booth. Moving shots tended to stand out from the rest of the film, which might well be made with multiple cameras. Such disparities were not good for continuity. Once camera blimps came into use (see 9.12 and 10.3), a new problem surfaced: the cameras were too heavy for traditional tripods, and they were difficult to move between shots. The solution was a strong, mobile camera support, and individual cinematographers and service firms created new versions of the sorts of dollies and cranes used at the end of the silent era.

Again, 1932 was a breakthrough year, with the introduction of the Bell & Howell Rotambulator. This was a 700-pound dolly that could raise the camera vertically from 18 inches to 7 feet, and the operator could pan, tilt, or track with ease. The Fearless Company's compact Panoram Dolly (1936) could pass through a 36-inch doorway. The spectacular tracking shots of some 1930s and 1940s films, where the camera traverses two or more rooms of a set, depended on such equipment.

Craning movements also became more common. Universal's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1931) used the giant 50-foot crane that had been built in 1929 for *Broadway*. The famous shot of pulling back above a huge railway platform full of wounded Confederate soldiers in *Gone with the Wind* employed a building crane. Large cranes could also be used in the studio, usually to create spectacular shots in historical epics, musicals, or fantasies (**10.4**). In MGM's 1939 musical fantasy *The Wizard of Oz*, the camera swooped over the Munchkin City and the Yellow Brick Road. Most cranes, however, were small models suitable for unobtrusive vertical and diagonal movements.

Technicolor

The most striking innovation of this era was color filmmaking. We have seen how silent films employed various nonphotographic processes that colored the film after it had been shot. There were also several attempts to introduce photographic color processes in the silent period. The Technicolor firm's two-strip system had been used occasionally in Hollywood films during the 1920s, and it

survived into the early sound era. It was costly to use, however, and it rendered colors mainly as pinkish orange and greenish blue **(Color Plate 10.1)**.

In the early 1930s, the firm introduced a new system, so-called three-strip Technicolor. It involved attaching colored filters and prisms to the camera. The light coming into the camera lens was split and recorded on three strips of black-and-white film. One strip registered red values in the spectrum, another green, and another blue. Positive images for each strip were then made and treated with colored dyes. On a fresh strip of film, gelatin on the surface absorbed the dyes, blending to create the original color of the scene. Having been separated from their source, the colors were combined by being absorbed into the surface of the film. (This made Technicolor prints slightly thicker than black-and-white ones.) The result was a very saturated color image.

Three-strip Technicolor was introduced publicly in a 1932 Disney short cartoon, *Flowers and Trees*. Pioneer Pictures, a small independent production firm owned by a major stockholder in Technicolor, produced a live-action musical short, *La Cucaracha*, in 1935 **(Color Plate 10.2)**. It demonstrated that Technicolor could render vivid colors with live actors in the studio. That same year, the feature *Becky Sharp* **(Color Plate 10.3)** showed that color could add to the appeal of a historical drama. Technicolor's ability to produce bright, saturated colors suggested that, for some films, the extra cost (nearly 30 percent higher than that of black-and-white) was justified. **(Color Plates 11.1, 15.7,** and **15.10** show other examples of three-strip Technicolor.) The Majors began using color, and the Technicolor company monopolized the process, supplying all cameras, providing supervisors for each production, and processing and printing the film.

Today we regard color as a realistic element in films, but in the 1930s and 1940s, it was often associated with fantasy and spectacle. It could be used for exotic adventures such as *The Garden of Allah* (1936), swashbucklers such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1939; **Video 10.1**), or musicals such as *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944).

Special Effects

The term *special effects*, used in connection with the 1930s, usually conjures up thoughts of films such as *King Kong* and *The Wizard of Oz*. Yet, as the president of the American Society of Cinematographers pointed out in 1943, "Ninety per cent of the trick and special effects shots in Hollywood movies are made with no thought of fooling or mystifying the audience. The great majority of camera trickery is used simply because filming the same action by conventional means would be too difficult, too expensive, or too dangerous."[2] Because special effects promoted ease, efficiency, and safety, they were used frequently and had a considerable influence on films of this period.

Most trick photography in the silent era was executed by the cinematographer during shooting. Multiple-camera filming and other complications associated with sound led to trick work's becoming the responsibility of specialists. Studios added special-effects departments that often devised equipment to meet the demands of specific scenes.

Special-effects work usually involved combining separately shot images in one of two ways: through *rear projection* (also called back projection) or *optical printing*. In back projection, the actors perform in a studio set as an image filmed earlier is projected onto a screen behind them (**10.5**). In most scenes in which characters ride in cars, for example, the vehicle is filmed in a studio while the background landscape passes on a screen (**10.6**). Back projection saved money because actors and crew did not have to go on location. (A small crew, or *second unit*, would travel to make the back-projection shots.) For example, much of the 1938 MGM film *Captains Courageous* took place on the deck of a fishing schooner, yet the actors worked entirely in the studio, with a tank of water below them and back-projected seascapes.

The optical printer offered more options for rephotographing and combining images. Essentially, an optical printer consisted of a projector aimed into the lens of a camera. Both could be moved forward and backward, different lenses could be substituted, and portions of the image could be masked off and the film reexposed. Images could be superimposed, or portions could be joined like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle; a single image could be enlarged or its speed altered.

Typically, the optical printer was used to save money by filling in portions of studio sets. By blocking off a part of a frame with a *matte*, the cinematographer could leave an unexposed portion into which the special-effects expert could later insert a *matte painting* (**10.7**).

Far more complex were *traveling mattes*. Here the effects cinematographer would make two or more masks for each frame of the trick passage and expose the film twice, frame by frame, using complementary masks in turn to cover portions of the film. Traveling mattes were commonly used to make *wipes*, where a line passes across the screen, removing one shot gradually as the next appears. In 1933, wipes became fashionable as a way of replacing *fades* or *dissolves* (two other transitional techniques) when RKO optical-printer expert Linwood Dunn created

John Swope/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty Images

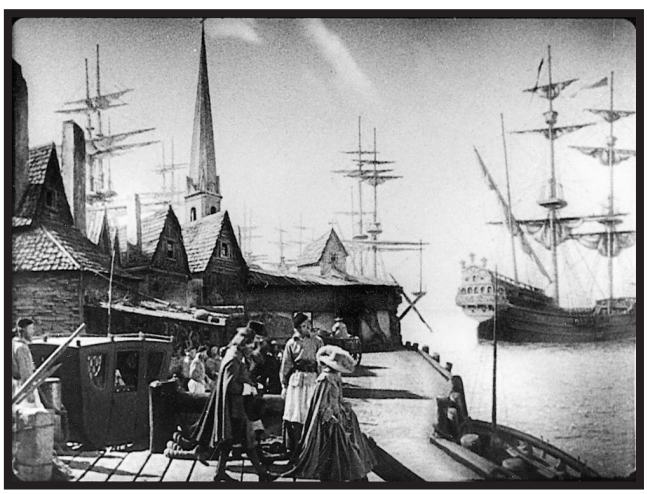
10.5 Melvyn Douglas and Myrna Loy sit in front of a back-projection screen supplying a moving background for their drive (*Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* (1948)).

Fury

10.6 This scene from Fritz Lang's 1936 film *Fury* uses rear projection.

elaborate transitions, moving in fan, sawtooth, and other shapes, in *Melody Cruise* and *Flying Down to Rio* (**10.8**).

The optical printer was often used to create *montage sequences*. These brief flurries of shots used superimpositions, calendar pages, newspaper headlines, and similar images to suggest the passage of time or the course of a lengthy action (**10.9**).



Queen Christina

10.7 Only the lower left portion of this shot from *Queen Christina* (1932) was built on the studio backlot; the ships, water, rooftops, and sky were added with a matte painting.

Flying Down to Rio

10.8 A wipe with a zigzag edge provides a transition from one shot to another in *Flying Down to Rio*.

Mr. Deeds Goes to Town

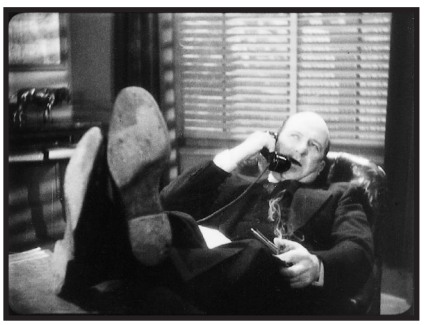
10.9 In *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, superimposed newspaper headlines create montage sequences summarizing the public's changing attitude toward the protagonist.

A Farewell to Arms

10.10 In *A Farewell to Arms* (1932, Frank Borzage), the romantic scene in which the main characters fall in love consists of soft, glittering images.

Shanghai Express

10.11 *Shanghai Express* (1932, Josef von Sternberg) employs an extensive range of soft grays to create glamorous images of Marlene Dietrich.


Twentieth Century

10.12 A depth composition in *Twentieth Century* (1934, Howard Hawks).

There were many other types of special effects. Entire scenes could be filmed using miniatures, as in the plane takeoffs and landings in Hawks's *Only Angels Have Wings*. Frame-by-frame three-dimensional animation was used occasionally, most notably to turn small puppets into the giant ape in *King Kong*. Other tricks involved simple mechanical devices, like the trapdoor elevator and dry-ice fumes that make the Wicked Witch seem to melt in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Cinematography Styles

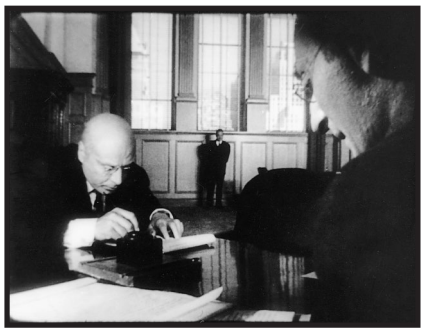
During the early 1930s, most cinematographers aimed for a "soft" image, based on the important stylistic trend of the 1920s (see Style and Technological Changes, p. 125). Now, however, the soft look became less extreme but more pervasive. Camera experts used fewer obvious filters or smeared, distorting glass masks. Instead, studio laboratories typically processed film to make it look grayer and softer. Moreover, in 1931, Eastman Kodak introduced a Super Sensitive Panchromatic stock for use with the more diffused incandescent lighting necessitated by the innovation of sound (owing to the hiss emitted by arc lamps). Some films used a sparkling, low-contrast image to convey a sense of glamour or romance (**10.10**). Others went for a clearer focus while still avoiding sharp blacks and whites (**10.11**).

Most Hollywood filmmakers of the 1930s clustered actors together in a relatively shallow area and then cut among them using shot/reverse shot. Others created compositions in greater depth, sometimes with the foreground plane slightly out of focus (**10.12**) but sometimes also using deep focus (**10.13**, **10.14**). (Such depth had precedents in the silent era; compare with 7.48.)

Director Orson Welles and cinematographer Gregg Toland took such deep-focus shots further and used them extensively in *Citizen Kane* (1941). Many of *Kane*'s depth shots used optical printing to combine sharply focused planes that had been filmed separately. Some shots, however, placed foreground elements near the lens and background elements at a considerable distance, yet kept everything in sharp focus; this occurs most spectacularly in the long take of the contract-signing scene (**10.15**). Welles went further in his second film, *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), for which cinematographer Stanley Cortez achieved many crisply focused depth shots without using trick photography (**10.16**). The influence of these visually innovative films soon spread throughout the industry. Staging in widely separated planes with deep focus became common practice (**10.17**).

The Public Enemy

10.13, 10.14 Deep-space compositions that keep all planes in focus, from *The Public Enemy* (1931, William Wellman) and *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939).



Citizen Kane

10.15 Deep focus with one character close to the camera, a second in the middle ground, and a third in extreme depth, in *Citizen Kane*.

Citizen Kane

10.16 The ballroom scene of *The Magnificent Ambersons* presents a vast set in clear focus behind the foreground couple.

Casablanca

10.17 A simple shot/reverse-shot situation in *Casablanca* (1943) places Rick close to the camera in front of a relatively focused deep playing space.

Overall, technological innovations of the era from 1930 to 1945 did not fundamentally change the classical Hollywood approach to filmmaking. Narrative action and character psychology remained central, and continuity rules still aided spatial orientation. Sound, color, deep focus, and other techniques enhanced the style.

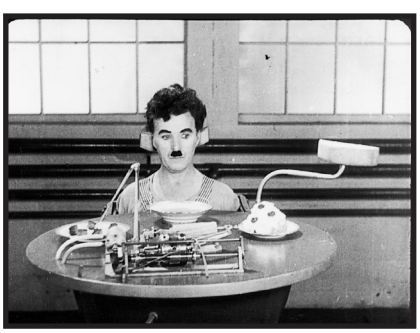
MAJOR DIRECTORS

In addition to the established directors working in Hollywood, the introduction of sound brought an influx of stage directors into the film studios; during this era, several screenwriters also joined the ranks of film directors. Moreover, the troubled political situation in Europe brought several émigrés' talents to the United States.

The Silent Veterans

Charles Chaplin opposed talking pictures. As his own producer and a phenomenally popular star, he could go on making "silent" films, with only music and sound effects, longer than anyone else in Hollywood. His output, however, slowed considerably. He made two features without dialogue, *City Lights* (1931) and *Modern Times* (1936). The latter reflected the left-wing views that would get him into trouble with the government and the public after the war. In it, the Little Tramp loses a dreary assembly-line job, gets thrown in jail after being mistaken for the leader of a demonstration, and later joins forces with a poor young woman to seek work. Despite its concentration on Depression-era problems, it is a very funny film (**10.18**). Oddly enough, so is Chaplin's first talkie, *The Great Dictator* (1940), a comedy on the unlikely subject of Nazi Germany. The resemblance between Hitler's moustache and Chaplin's had often drawn comment, and Chaplin took advantage of their physical similarities to play Hynkel, dictator of Tomania (**10.19**).

After Josef von Sternberg had directed his second sound film, *The Blue Angel*, in Germany (see 9.21 and 9.22), he returned to Hollywood with the film's star, Marlene Dietrich. They made six more films together, including *Morocco* (1930) and *Blonde Venus* (1932). While the stories were conventional melodramas, their style placed them



Modern Times

10.18 In *Modern Times*, factory worker Charlie tests a new machine that feeds the workers automatically while they stay on the job.

The Great Dictator

10.19 In *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin expresses Hynkel's lust for power by dancing with an inflatable globe, tossing it about until it bursts.

among the era's most beautiful films. Von Sternberg's fascination with textures and dense compositions intensified. In particular, costume, lighting, and cinematography glamorized Dietrich to an extent that has seldom been equaled (see 10.11). Von Sternberg also made films without Dietrich during this period, including two somber literary adaptations, *An American Tragedy* (1931) and *Crime and Punishment* (1935).

Ernst Lubitsch adjusted quickly to sound with *The Love Parade* (see Sound and Filmmaking, p. 171). He went on to make many popular musicals and comedies. Foremost among these was *Trouble in Paradise* (1932). It begins with a witty scene in which an elegant couple dine together in a Venetian hotel and then discover that each is a thief out to rob the other. They fall in love and continue to ply their trade until a scheme to rob a rich woman raises problems (**10.20; Video 10.2**). Lubitsch also directed Greta Garbo's penultimate film, *Ninotchka* (1939). Along with Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) was one of the rare comedies about the Nazis.

John Ford continued to be remarkably prolific during the 1930s, signing twenty-six films during the decade, plus several more in the early 1940s before he went into the Navy. Working principally at 20th Century-Fox, he directed some of the studio's most popular stars, making a trio of films with Will Rogers (*Dr. Bull* [1933], *Judge Priest* [1934], and *Steamboat Round the Bend* [1935]) and a costume picture, *Wee Willie Winkie* (1937), starring Shirley Temple. Despite his early concentration on Westerns, he made only one during this era, *Stagecoach* (1939), but it became one of the genre's classics. It traced the trip of a group of people through dangerous desert territory. In this film, Ford first used the unearthly cliff formations of Monument Valley, a setting that would become his trademark in later Westerns.

That same year, Ford directed *Young Mr. Lincoln*, in which a murder case solved by Lincoln suggests the combination of simplicity and shrewdness that will eventually make him President. *How Green Was My Valley* (1941) is a richly nostalgic story of a close-knit Welsh coal-mining family's gradual disintegration. Ford created deeply emotional situations while using great stylistic restraint. Although he used conventional shot/reverse shots and cut-ins in some scenes, Ford downplayed important or sentimental moments by staying in long shot or holding quietly on a silent image of the characters in contemplation (**10.21**). Ford also used considerable depth in his staging and cinematography, stylistic traits that were to influence Orson Welles, who studied *Stagecoach* (**10.22**) before making *Citizen Kane*.

Howard Hawks, who had begun directing in the mid-1920s, became increasingly prominent during this era. Like Ford, he worked in a variety of genres, concentrating on succinct handling of plot and performance and displaying a mastery of rapid pacing and continuity editing. Hawks explained his approach in a typically down-to-earth fashion: "I try to tell my story as simply as possible, with the camera at eye level. I just imagine the way the story should be told and I do it. If it's a scene that I don't want anybody to monkey with or cut, I don't give them any way to cut it."[3]

Trouble in Paradise

10.20 Thief and potential victim in one of the gleaming Art Deco sets of *Trouble in Paradise*.

How Green Was My Valley

10.21 In *How Green Was My Valley*, a composition reminiscent of D. W. Griffith's films (see 3.51) lingers over the family's silent reaction to bad news.

How Green Was My Valley

10.22 In *Stagecoach*, John Ford places his actors in three layers of depth and films from a slightly low camera height, techniques that Welles would carry further in *Citizen Kane*.

His Girl Friday

10.23 Typically busy staging in *His Girl Friday* as the sheriff has Walter Burns handcuffed while a reporter babbles into a phone in the foreground.

Stella Dallas

10.24 In the famous final scene of *Stella Dallas*, Stella stands outside in the rain, weeping as she watches her daughter's wedding, and then turns to leave forever.

If Ford's *Stagecoach* is the quintessential Western, then Hawks's *His Girl Friday* (1940) is a model sound comedy. The hilarious script (from Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's play *The Front Page*) involves a newspaper editor who tries to prevent his ex-wife from giving up reporting to remarry. He lures her into trying to expose some crooked politicians who plan to execute a mentally incompetent killer in order to swing their election. Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell, and a bevy of character actors delivered the wisecracking dialogue at breakneck speed while Hawks recorded the action primarily with "invisible" shot/reverse shots and reframing movements (**10.23**).

Hawks's aviation adventure film *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) is set in a small South American port where a flying service tries to get mail through a narrow mountain pass. Using simple resources, Hawks created an intense atmosphere of danger and romance. Much of the action takes place in and around a single building, at night or in a fog, as the characters wait for each returning flight (see 10.14). As often happens in Hawks films, the characters, male and female alike, have to prove themselves tough and stoic.

William Wyler had begun directing in the late silent era, making mostly inexpensive Westerns. His breakthrough came in 1936, when he began working for independent producer Samuel Goldwyn. He made *These Three* (1936), an adaptation of Lillian Hellman's play *The Children's Hour*, and several other distinguished films over the next few years. These included *Jezebel* (1938), *Wuthering Heights* (1939), and another Hellman adaptation, *The Little Foxes* (1941). On the last two, Gregg Toland was Wyler's cinematographer, and both films display deep-focus imagery similar to that of Ford's and Welles's films.

Veteran director Frank Borzage continued to specialize in sentimental melodramas. *A Farewell to Arms* (1932) adapted Hemingway's novel of an American soldier and a British nurse who fall in love during World War I. Borzage and cinematographer Charles B. Lang filmed the characters in a glimmering soft-focus style that enhanced the intense romanticism (see 10.10). By contrast, King Vidor continued to work in a variety of genres, from Westerns to melodramas. His 1937 remake of *Stella Dallas* is a classic melodrama, telling the story of a working-class woman who marries a factory owner's son. Her inability to overcome her vulgar upbringing eventually threatens her daughter's marriage to a society man (**10.24**).

Raoul Walsh also worked in various genres, making several major action films in the late 1930s and early 1940s. *The Roaring Twenties* (1939), a gangster film, contrasts the lives of three World War I veterans. The film is notable partly for several spectacular montage sequences, including a representation of the stock-market crash as a ticker-tape machine that swells to huge size and shatters. *High Sierra* (1940) is the sympathetic story of a killer fleeing through the mountains to escape the police; he meets a handicapped girl whom he befriends. The film was a turning point in the career of Humphrey Bogart, who had previously played mostly villainous supporting roles; the next year he would play tough detective Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*.

New Directors

The introduction of sound brought several stage directors from New York to Hollywood. Among these was George Cukor, who specialized in prestigious literary adaptations, such as *Camille* (1936), with Greta Garbo, and *David Copperfield* (1935), with W. C. Fields. Cukor worked mostly at MGM during this period. Rouben Mamoulian also came from Broadway; his *Applause* (1929) drew attention for its fluid camera movements. Similarly, his adaptation of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1932) begins with an unusually extended subjective tracking shot as we watch through Jekyll's eyes as he enters a lecture hall.

Another director who came from Broadway was Vincente Minnelli, who specialized in musicals. He joined MGM's musicals unit in 1940. This unit, under producer Arthur Freed, soon gathered some of the finest musical talent in Hollywood, including Judy Garland, Gene Kelly, and Fred Astaire. Minnelli did choreography for Busby Berkeley films, including *Strike Up the Band* (1940), and then graduated to directing with *Cabin in the Sky* (1943), a musical with an all-star black cast. His most celebrated

CITIZEN KANE AND *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS*

While still a young man, Orson Welles (born 1915) was directing unusual productions of theatrical and radio plays. For example, in 1936 he staged *Macbeth* with an all-black cast and set it in a Haitian jungle. In 1938, he gained nationwide notoriety with a radio adaptation of H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, adapting it into a series of news bulletins and panicking thousands of listeners who believed that a Martian invasion was in progress.

In 1939, Welles was put under contract by RKO. His first completed project was *Citizen Kane*, one of the most admired of all films. Welles was given an extraordinary degree of control over his work, including the right to choose his cast and to edit the final film. Not surprisingly, the result was controversial. It was a veiled portrait of publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst and his long-term affair with film star Marion Davies. Hearst tried to have *Kane* suppressed, but it was released in 1941, with many audiences being aware of its subtext.

Both the narrative structure and the style of *Kane* are dazzlingly complex. Beginning with the death of Charles Foster Kane, the film switches to a newsreel that sketches out his life. A reporter is assigned to discover the meaning of Kane's mysterious last word, "Rosebud." He interviews people who had known Kane, and a series of flashbacks reveals a contradictory, elusive personality. Ultimately the reporter's quest fails, and the ending retains an ambiguity rare in classical Hollywood films.

Stylistically, *Kane* was flamboyant, drawing extensively on RKO's resources. For some scenes, Welles used quiet, lengthy takes. Other passages, notably the newsreel and several montage sequences, used quick cutting and abrupt changes in sound volume. To emphasize the vast spaces of some of the sets, Welles and cinematographer Gregg Toland worked at achieving deep-focus shots, placing some elements close to the camera, others at a distance (see 10.15). Many of these deep shots were made using several types of special effects (**10.25**). Optical-printer work combined several tracking shots imperceptibly into one (as in the crane shot through a nightclub skylight, where a flash of lightning blends two shots) and made the sets more impressive by combining miniatures and matte paintings with real-size sets. It has been claimed that more than half of *Citizen Kane*'s shots contain special effects. The sound track was also altered substantially after filming. All these stylistic aspects of *Citizen Kane* proved highly influential during the 1940s.

Citizen Kane

10.25 In this shot from *Citizen Kane*, the large objects in the foreground were filmed separately and combined with the set and actors beyond.

Welles's second RKO feature was *The Magnificent Ambersons*. The plot does not use flashbacks, but it covers a lengthy period, the decline of a wealthy family as industrialization encroaches on a midwestern town. Welles establishes a nostalgic atmosphere in a prologue, narrated by him, which is a montage sequence depicting turn-of-the-century life. The film gradually adopts a grimmer tone as this genteel lifestyle disappears.

Stylistically, *Ambersons* takes *Kane*'s techniques in less extravagant directions. Still, there are elaborate camera movements, as when Aunt Fanny has hysterics and the camera tracks through several rooms as Georgie tries to calm her. The deep-focus effects were more often done in a single exposure (see 10.16), and a larger budget allowed Welles to build entire sets and downplay optical-printer work **(Video 10.3)**.

After adverse audience reactions at previews, RKO took *Ambersons* out of Welles's control and cut it drastically, adding scenes made by the assistant director and editor. This truncated version was given a minor release. No complete version of the film survives, but even so it remains a masterpiece.

film of the war period was *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), with Garland.

Other new directors of this era appeared from the ranks of screenwriters. Preston Sturges wrote scenarios during the 1930s, working on *The Power and the Glory* (1933, William K. Howard), a film with a complex flashback structure that was a precursor to *Citizen Kane*. Sturges began directing with *The Great McGinty* (1940), a political satire, and went on to make a string of popular comedies during the war years. In *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1944), for example, he poked fun at American prudishness. A young woman winds up pregnant after a wild party and claims that she married the father (whose name she remembers as something like "Ignatz Ratskywatsky"). When he proves hard to locate, her mild-mannered boyfriend helps her avoid disgrace by marrying her; she then bears sextuplets, and the family becomes the focus of a media furor. Despite toning down by the MPPDA, the film remains audacious. For a while, Sturges was among Paramount's most popular directors.

John Huston, who had worked on the screenplays of *Jezebel* and *High Sierra*, was another scriptwriter-turned-director. Later in this chapter we shall discuss his directorial debut, *The Maltese Falcon*, as an early instance of film noir. Huston was in the military for much of the war, making some major war documentaries, and returned to Hollywood after 1945.

Orson Welles, the most influential director to emerge between 1930 and 1945, had already achieved success in a number of other fields including stage and radio (see *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*, p. 199).

New Émigré Directors

Foreign filmmakers continued to come to Hollywood. Some were lured by higher salaries or the chance to work in the world's best-equipped studios. Increasingly, however, the spread of Fascism in Europe and the onset of World War II drove filmmakers to seek refuge in the United States.

Dissatisfied with his lack of authority in England and fascinated by the technical possibilities offered in Hollywood, Alfred Hitchcock signed a contract with David O. Selznick. His first American film, *Rebecca* (1940), was a prestigious literary adaptation and won a best-picture Academy Award. He soon became known as "the master of suspense." Among his several wartime films was *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943). A man driven to seduce and kill rich widows visits his sister's family in a small California town. He charms everyone, but his young niece is shattered when she ferrets out the truth about him. Through location shooting, Hitchcock created a sense of small-town normalcy in contrast to the villain's secret crimes.

The German exodus to Hollywood that had begun in the silent era accelerated after the Nazis gained power in 1933. Fritz Lang arrived in 1934. Although he was able to work fairly steadily (about a film a year up to 1956), Lang seldom had much control over his projects and never gained the prestige he had had in Germany. He worked in many genres, making Westerns, spy pictures, melodramas, and suspense films. *You Only Live Once* (1937) is the affecting story of a young ex-convict who tries to go straight but is falsely accused of a murder.

Billy Wilder had been a scriptwriter in Germany and resumed this career in Hollywood, teaming up with Charles Brackett on many screenplays, including those for *Ninotchka* and *Ball of Fire*. His first solo directorial effort was a comedy, *The Major and the Minor* (1942), and his grim study of alcoholism, *The Lost Weekend* (1945) was voted an Oscar as best picture. Although Otto Preminger was Jewish, he began in Hollywood by playing a Nazi villain. He managed, however, to slip into directing in the early 1940s. Wilder and Preminger made two of the period's classic film noirs.

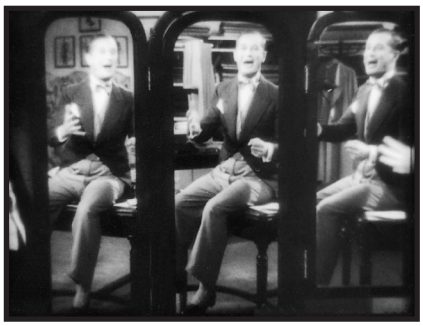
GENRE INNOVATIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Many genres from the silent era continued uninterrupted into the sound period. Technical changes within the industry and social changes in the world at large, however, caused some new genres to arise and some new variants to be introduced into old ones.

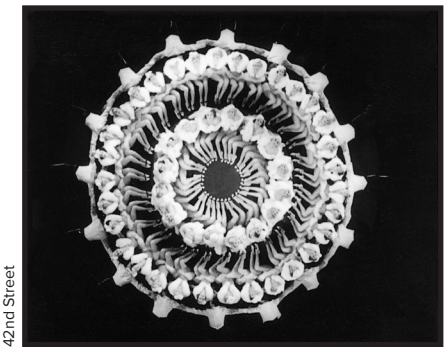
The Musical

The introduction of sound promoted the musical as a major genre. Some early *revue musicals* simply strung numbers together. Others, such as *The Broadway Melody*, were *backstage musicals*, motivating their numbers as performances by their characters. There were also *operetta musicals*, exemplified by *The Love Parade*, which played out their stories in fantasy locales. Finally, there were *integrated musicals*, in which the singing and dancing occurred in ordinary settings. (Backstage musicals often mixed in a few integrated numbers with those performed on stage.) The revue musical dwindled in importance, but the other types all remained popular.

A delightful example of the operetta subgenre was Rouben Mamoulian's *Love Me Tonight* (1932). The film begins with a sequence influenced by René Clair's early sound films: a Parisian street gradually comes to life in the early morning, with each rhythmic noise contributing to a beat that leads into a musical number. In a celebrated



10.26 Maurice Chevalier sings into three mirrors in *Love Me Tonight*.



10.27 Busby Berkeley creates an abstract pattern by shooting a dance number from directly overhead in *42nd Street*.

10.28 The "Let's Face the Music" number in *Follow the Fleet* (1936, Mark Sandrich).

sequence, a song passes from person to person, with the scenes being linked by dissolves. The protagonist, a tailor, sings a song, "Isn't It Romantic?" (**10.26**), which is picked up by a composer, who in turn sings it to soldiers on a train; when the soldiers sing it around their campfire, a gypsy hears it and plays it for his friends; then it makes its way to the heroine, a princess who sings the song on the balcony of her provincial castle.

The backstage musical was typified by a series of films made by Warner Bros. and choreographed by Busby Berkeley. In *42nd Street* (1933, Lloyd Bacon), the film that established many conventions of the genre, a naive chorus girl rises to sudden stardom when the lead player is injured just before the opening of a big Broadway show. The director encourages her: "All right now, I'm through, but you keep your feet on the ground, and your head on those shoulders of yours, and Sawyer, you're going out a youngster, but you've *got* to come back a star!" And, of course, she does become a star. The stage show includes some of Berkeley's elaborate dance numbers, shot using a crane and overhead camera platform (**10.27**).

Among the most popular musicals were those starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, choreographed by Hermes Pan. In *Swing Time* (1936, George Stevens), for example, Astaire plays a vaudeville hoofer who courts Rogers, a dance instructor. Whether having a backstage plot or an integrated plot, Astaire–Rogers musicals were romances, and many of the dance numbers advance the couple's on-screen courtship. Despite initial misunderstandings and antagonisms, the elegant meshing of their movements shows that they are made for each other (**10.28**).

MGM also made many musicals during this era. Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland were paired in several films about teenagers putting on shows, such as *Strike Up the Band* (1940, Berkeley). Garland became a star in the glossy Technicolor fantasy *The Wizard of Oz* (1939, Victor Fleming). One of her finest films was Minnelli's *Meet Me in St. Louis* **(Color Plate 10.4)**. Another MGM star whose career began during this period was Gene Kelly, whose dance style was often boisterous and athletic, as in the "Make Way for Tomorrow" number in *Cover Girl* (for which Kelly was loaned to Columbia; 1944, Charles Vidor).

The Screwball Comedy

In *screwball comedy*, the romantic couple at the center of the story are eccentrics, often portrayed through slapstick. The films are usually set among wealthy people who can, despite the hardships of the Depression, afford to behave oddly. The romantic couple may initially be antagonistic, as in George Cukor's *The Philadelphia Story* (1940). Or the couple's love may cross class lines; then the wealthy parents must be converted (as in Capra's *You Can't Take It with You*, 1938) or thwarted (as in Cukor's *Holiday*, 1938).

Although eccentric romantic comedies were made during the silent era, screwball comedy gained new prominence in 1934 with two very different films. Hawks's *Twentieth Century* is utterly cynical in its treatment of its lead actors, Carole Lombard and John Barrymore. A hammy theatrical entrepreneur makes a star of a beautiful store clerk and then seduces her. She soon behaves as theatrically in everyday life as he does; during the film's second half, set on a train, they quarrel and throw tantrums (**10.29**). The other major screwball comedy of 1934, Capra's *It Happened One Night*, is more sentimental. With its spoiled heroine fleeing her father in order to marry a superficial playboy, it popularized the "madcap heiress" character. A down-to-earth reporter aids the heroine in order to get a scoop, and the two fall in love (**10.30**).

Twentieth Century

10.29 The protagonists compete at throwing theatrical fits in *Twentieth Century*.

It Happened One Night

10.30 The heiress relaxes as the reporter demonstrates his skill at hitchhiking in *It Happened One Night*.

Mr. Deeds Goes to Town

10.31 In *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, the hero is more concerned with playing his tuba than with a lawyer's news of his large inheritance.

The image of a spoiled rich woman was pushed to its limits in Hawks's *Bringing Up Baby* (1938).

The genre developed quickly, and Capra remained one of its main exponents. In his *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), a small-town man becomes a national idol when he uses his unexpected inheritance to help dispossessed farmers. Venal lawyers try to have him declared insane, although he is only eccentric, as Capra demonstrates from the start (**10.31**).

Early films in the genre dealt with the Depression. In *It Happened One Night*, the reporter strives to regain his job by writing a story about the fugitive heiress. In *My Man Godfrey* (1936, Gregory LaCava), a homeless man hires on as a butler to an eccentric wealthy family; the characters frequently mention "forgotten men"—a Depression-era term for the unemployed, many of whom were veterans of World War I. Later in the decade, however, many screwball comedies' plots ignored contemporary social problems, especially those of unemployment. In *Holiday* (1938, George Cukor), the hero longs to quit his lucrative job and find his purpose in life; all the film's positive characters value individualism while despising snobbishness and wealth (**10.32**). *You Can't Take It with You*, a paean to idiosyncrasies, concerns a large family who take into their home people who quit dull jobs in order to pursue personal interests.

The comedy of sexual antagonism also continued unabated. In Sturges's *The Lady Eve* (1941), a female cardsharp sets out to fleece the heir to a brewing fortune; instead, they fall in love, and when he discovers her background and rejects her, she vows revenge (**10.33**). Similarly, in *Ball of Fire* (1941, Hawks), a nightclub singer fleeing the law bamboozles a group of naive professors and then falls in love with one of them.

The screwball genre flourished between 1934 and 1945. Sturges contributed a bitter late example with *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948), in which an orchestra conductor believes his wife has a lover and during a concert fantasizes getting free of her in three ways, each to an appropriate musical piece. Hawks made postwar screwball comedies; in *I Was a Male War Bride* (1948), a French officer suffers a series of humiliations when he must dress as a woman in order to accompany his fiancée to the United States after World War II; *Monkey Business* (1952) portrays the delirious effects of a youth serum on seemingly respectable people.

Holiday

10.32 The independent, positive characters in *Holiday* celebrate eccentricity by jokingly awarding the hero a toy giraffe.

The Lady Eve

10.33 In *The Lady Eve*, brewing heir Charles Pike suffers the comic humiliation typical of the screwball comedy.

The Horror Film

During the early sound era, the horror film became a major genre. Some horror films had been made during the 1920s, mainly by Universal and usually starring

Lon Chaney (see 7.36). The pattern for many future films was set in 1927 with Paul Leni's popular *The Cat and the Canary*, in which a group of people meet in an isolated mansion to hear a will read.

Universal repeated such successes in its horror cycle, beginning with the vampire film *Dracula* (1931, Tod Browning). Although it betrayed its origins as a stage version of Bram Stoker's original 1897 novel and suffered from some of the slowness of early sound films, *Dracula* became a hit largely due to Bela Lugosi's performance in the title role. Shortly thereafter, James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) made a star of Boris Karloff, who played the monster with the help of heavy makeup. The Universal horror cycle hit its stride from 1932 to 1935. Whale made *The Old Dark House* (1932), which balanced suspense and comedy by trapping a cast of eccentrics in an isolated country home on the proverbial dark and stormy night. He also directed *The Invisible Man* (1933) and *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935).

One of the most stylish and effective of these films was *The Mummy*, directed in 1932 by Karl Freund, the German cinematographer who had shot *The Last Laugh* and many other important films during the silent era. The mummy of an ancient Egyptian priest returns to life in modern times and attempts to kill a woman he believes to be a reincarnation of his dead love (**10.34**).

A second significant cycle of horror films was made in RKO's B unit during the early 1940s. Producer Val Lewton took charge of production there in 1942. A small number of directors worked under Lewton—Jacques Tourneur, Mark Robson, and Robert Wise—but the producer created a consistent tone and style for the films. Making a virtue of budget necessities, the Lewton films avoided graphic depictions of monsters or violence, concentrating instead on characters threatened by unseen terrors. In Tourneur's *Cat People* (1942), the heroine is obsessed with a black leopard in the zoo and seems to have inherited a supernatural ability to transform into a killer cat (**10.35**). Tourneur also directed another of the Lewton unit's most effective films, *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943). These titles were chosen by the studio and assigned to Lewton, and he and his collaborators came up with extraordinarily poetic and frightening films to fit them.

The Mummy

10.34 *The Mummy* uses makeup, lighting (including a tiny "pin" light reflected in the eyes), and Boris Karloff's menacing performance to create an eerie atmosphere on a low budget.

Cat People

10.35 The opening scene of *Cat People*, in which the heroine sketches a leopard, typifies the simple but disturbing juxtapositions of the Val Lewton horror films.

The Social Problem Film

The Depression created a new focus on social problems, and many 1930s films dealt with them, frequently adopting a realistic style that was far from the escapism often associated with this era. In 1934, for example, King Vidor independently made *Our Daily Bread*, which portrayed a group of unemployed people who start a cooperative farm. Despite various challenges, including a drought, they eventually succeed. The scene of the group digging a long channel and irrigating their land uses editing and framing to create an exhilarating image of collective triumph somewhat reminiscent of Soviet films of the era.

Warner Bros. was particularly committed to social problem films. In *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932, Mervyn LeRoy), a World War I veteran is falsely accused of a theft. While a fugitive, he attempts to pawn his war medal, only to be shown dozens of such medals that unemployed veterans had pawned. In the end he disappears into the night, explaining how he now lives: "I steal," an ironic suggestion that the legal system has pushed him into the underworld. *Wild Boys of the Road* (1933, William Wellman) depicts the plight of homeless orphaned and abandoned children.

Fritz Lang made one of the strongest social problem films, *Fury* (1936, MGM), on the subject of lynching. While traveling to meet his fiancée, the hero is arrested in a small town and falsely accused of murder. The citizens burn down

Fury

10.36, 10.37 A newsreel image of a woman during the lynching scene and the same woman's reaction to the footage in court, in *Fury*.

the jail, and he is apparently killed. In fact, he survives but is so embittered that he nearly allows his attackers to be convicted of his murder. The film depicts newsreel cinematographers filming the attempted lynching. At the trial, this footage is used as evidence, and the defendants are forced to confront their own actions (**10.36**, **10.37**).

John Ford contributed an important social problem film with *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), an adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel about displaced Oklahoma farmers during the Depression. The Joad family is driven off their land by the great drought that created the Dust Bowl in the Plains states. Traveling to California for work, they are exploited as migrant workers. They temporarily find a haven in a government-run camp that suggests the benefits of the Roosevelt administration.

After the United States entered the war, increased employment and prosperity led to fewer social problem films. The genre revived in the postwar era with such films as *Gentlemen's Agreement* (1947, Elia Kazan) and *Crossfire* (1947, Edward Dmytryk).

The Gangster Film

Somewhat related to the social problem film was the gangster genre. Although there had been occasional films about small-time street gangs in the silent era, the first major movie with a gangster protagonist was Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld* (1927; see Genres and Directors). The genre became more prominent in the early 1930s with *Little Caesar* (1930, Mervyn LeRoy), *The Public Enemy* (1931, William Wellman), and *Scarface* (1932, Howard Hawks). Gangster films were topical, deriving material from the organized crime that grew up during Prohibition (1919–1933).

Gangster films centered on a ruthless criminal's rise to power. Like many films in the genre, *The Public Enemy* hinges on the contrast between two men (friends or brothers), one of whom gets an honest job while the other turns to crime. Typically, the growing status of the gangsters in these films is signaled by their increasingly expensive clothing and flashy cars (**10.38**).

Like other gangster films, *The Public Enemy* was widely criticized for glamorizing violence. The Hays Code forbade the sympathetic depiction of criminals. Producers defended the genre by claiming that they were simply examining a social problem. *The Public Enemy* begins with a title claiming that the film seeks "to honestly depict an environment that exists today in a certain strata [sic] of American life, rather than glorify the hoodlum or the criminal." The protagonists of these films all die violently in the end, so the studios argued that the plots showed that crime does not pay. Tom, in *The Public Enemy*, is gunned down by a rival gang (**10.39**), and his body is dumped ignominiously at his home. Similarly, the main character in *Scarface* is killed during a violent shoot-out with police. Still, pressure groups insisted that such endings did not wipe out the impression that crime was lucrative and exciting. The release of *Scarface* was delayed, and the producers were forced to add scenes—not filmed by Hawks—of officials and reformers decrying the gangs' power and violence.

The studios tried to avoid censorship pressures while retaining the excitement associated with the gangster genre. As a result, actors closely identified with criminal roles, such as James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson, also played tough, violent cops, as Cagney does in *G-Men* (1935, William Keighley). Or the gangster became less central, with the story focusing on other characters tempted toward a life of crime, as in *Dead End* (1938, William Wyler) and *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938, Michael Curtiz). In the latter, two friends grow up, one becoming a gangster, the other a priest; a group of children idolize the gangster. Finally the priest persuades the gangster to pretend to be terrified just before his execution so that children will be disillusioned and not take him as a role model.

Film Noir

To some extent the cynical, violent narratives of the gangster films were taken over by the *film noir*. This was a term applied by French critics in 1946 to a group of US films made during the war and released abroad in quick

The Public Enemy

10.38 After his first big payoff, the protagonist of *The Public Enemy* is measured for a new suit.

The Public Enemy

10.39 Tom mutters "I ain't so tough" after being shot, a scene designed to deglamorize his criminal career (*The Public Enemy*).

succession after 1945. *Noir* means "black" or "dark" but can also imply "gloomy." Less a genre than a stylistic and narrative tendency, film noir is often considered to have started in 1941 with Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* or even earlier with RKO's B film *Stranger on the Third Floor* (1940, Boris Ingster). Most film noirs involve crime, but the tendency crosses genres. It includes social problem films such as Wilder's *The Lost Weekend* and spy films such as Lang's *Ministry of Fear* (1944).

The film noir tendency derived from American hard-boiled detective fiction of the 1920s. In such harsh, tawdry novels as *Red Harvest* (1929), Dashiell Hammett reacted against traditional British detective stories, which often involved staid country-house settings and upper-class characters. Other major authors of hard-boiled fiction included Raymond Chandler and James M. Cain. Many of their novels and stories were adapted as films, starting with Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*. Filmic influences came from German Expressionism, French Poetic Realism (see Chapter 13), and the stylistic innovations of *Citizen Kane*.

As in their literary models, film noir protagonists tend to be men, usually detectives or criminals characterized by pessimism, self-doubt, or a cold, detached view of the world. Women are usually sexually alluring but treacherous, leading the protagonists into danger or using them for selfish ends. A common setting for a film noir would be a big city, especially at night; shiny, rain-slicked pavements, dark alleyways, and sleazy bars are typical locales. Many of the films use distinctive high and low angles, low-key lighting, wide-angle lenses, and location shooting.

The Maltese Falcon established many of the conventions of the film noir. Humphrey Bogart became a major star in the role of Sam Spade, a private detective who must decide whether to turn in the treacherous femme fatale who has hired him and whom he (perhaps) loves. In a long take he bitterly explains why he must send her to prison and promises to wait for her during the many years of her sentence. Brigid is taken away in an elevator by the police, marked as the archetypal film noir heroine by the shadow on her face (**10.40**).

Film noir's debt to German film of the 1920s may be reflected in the fact that four important émigrés contributed to this trend. Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse der Spieler*, *M*, and other German works had anticipated film noir, and his Hollywood career continued in this same vein. In *Ministry of Fear*, the hero is released from a psychiatric facility after the mercy killing of his wife. He wanders into a grim charity fête and accidentally becomes enmeshed in a battle against Nazi spies. Lang's association with independent producer Walter Wanger led to two other notable wartime film noirs: *Woman in the Window* (1944) and *Scarlet Street* (1945). Robert Siodmak began making B films in Hollywood in 1941, achieving a reputation in film noir in 1944 with *Phantom Lady* and *The Suspect* (1945); after the war he would lead this tendency with such films as *The Killers* (1946).

Another German émigré, Otto Preminger, rose to fame with a major film noir. In *Laura* (1944), an embittered working-class detective investigates the murder of an advertising executive and falls in love with her through her diary and portrait. *Laura*'s flashbacks and plot twists offer an extreme case of film noir narration.

The Maltese Falcon

10.40 Our last view of the femme fatale of *The Maltese Falcon*.

Double Indemnity

10.41 Film noir shadows fall across the set as Walter Neff sneaks up the back stairs to his apartment in *Double Indemnity*.

Objective Burma

10.42 The hero of *Objective Burma* gives a journalist a captured Japanese flag as a souvenir.

They Were Expendable

10.43 John Ford minimized special effects and used real boats and planes at sea for the battle scenes in *They Were Expendable*.

Perhaps the definitive wartime example of the film noir came from yet another émigré. The script for Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944) originated in a unique combination of hard-boiled authors, with Raymond Chandler adapting a James M. Cain novel. A woman seduces an insurance salesman into helping her murder her husband; gradually the scheme unravels in mutual suspicions and betrayals. The film unfolds in a series of flashbacks as the dying salesman speaks into a dictaphone, confessing to his friend, an insurance investigator who is hot on his trail **(Video 10.4)**. Many typical traits of the film noir are present: the venality of the central characters, the voice-over narration by the insurance salesman, the somber urban setting, and the doomed romance. (Film noir was the one type of Hollywood film that permitted an unhappy ending, though abrupt—and often unconvincing—happy endings were sometimes added.) *Double Indemnity* also used a lighting motif conventional to the genre: patterned shadows cast across the scene (**10.41**).

The War Film

From 1930 to 1945, films about war passed through remarkable changes. The disillusionment of World War I had resulted in a pacifism that dominated films of the 1930s. (Until Pearl Harbor, most citizens opposed American entry into World War II.) Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) was one of the most uncompromisingly pacifist films, showing a sympathetic young German hero and ending unhappily with his death. Throughout the decade, war was depicted as tragic and senseless. Warner Bros. made two versions of *Dawn Patrol* (1930, Howard Hawks; 1938, Edmund Goulding), about a commander who agonizes over sending pilots out to be killed. Even the musical *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933, Mervyn LeRoy) contains a song—"Remember My Forgotten Man"—about World War I veterans impoverished by the Depression.

After Pearl Harbor, however, the film industry supported the war cause wholeheartedly. Combat films often showed Americans from various ethnic backgrounds united in battling the Axis. In Hawks's *Air Force* (1943), men named Winocki, Quincannon, and Weinberg form part of a bomber crew.

Most war films featuring the Nazis treated them simply as cold-hearted killers. Propaganda directed against the Japanese, however, was often more racist in tone, drawing upon stereotypical images. In *Objective Burma* (1945, Raoul Walsh), for example, the hero leads a division of paratroopers to recapture part of Burma from the Japanese (**10.42**), referred to as "monkeys" (a common racial epithet used during World War II). In one scene the GIs discover the bodies of American soldiers tortured and killed by the Japanese forces. A reporter with the group comments on the horrors he has seen in his career: "But this, this is different. This was done in cold blood by a people who, who claim to be civilized. Civilized and degenerate moral idiots! . . . Wipe 'em out! Wipe 'em off the face of the earth!"

One of the few combat films that presented a less gung-ho image was Ford's *They Were Expendable* (1945), a story of PT-boat sailors who fight valiantly but go down to defeat in the Philippines. Some are evacuated, but others, including one of the protagonists, must stay behind to face capture or death. Ford, who had been in the Navy and was injured filming combat footage for his documentary *The Battle of Midway* (1942), made several realistic scenes of PT boats in combat for *They Were Expendable* (**10.43**). Ford later remarked of this film, "I *despise* these happy endings—with a kiss at the finish—I've never done that. Of course, they *were* glorious in defeat in the Philippines—they kept on fighting."[4] As Ford suggests, *They Were Expendable* presents a remarkably unvarnished picture of heroism.

ANIMATION AND THE STUDIO SYSTEM

Before 1910, animated films had been novelties. By the 1930s, however, labor-saving devices had made them a part of nearly every theater's program. Each of the Majors and Minors regularly released a cartoon series, either under contract with an independent firm or from their own animation units.

Some of these series were highly standardized, turned out by efficient, assembly-line systems. For nearly forty years after 1930, Paul Terry provided his Terrytoons biweekly for Fox/20th Century-Fox. Universal released films by Walter Lantz from 1929 through 1972; Lantz's most famous character, Woody Woodpecker, debuted in 1941. Columbia had its own short-film division, Screen Gems, which made cartoons starring Krazy Kat, Scrappy, and others until 1949.

At the opposite end of the scale from these series were those produced by the Walt Disney Studio, an independent company devoted solely to making cartoons. Disney's enormous success in 1928 with the Mickey Mouse short *Steamboat Willie* had brought animation into the sound age and given it respectability. The studio went on centering cartoons around Mickey but also established a series of "Silly Symphonies," based on musical pieces and containing no continuing characters. *Skeleton Dance* (1929) featured a macabre celebration in a graveyard.

By 1932, Disney moved from Columbia to distribute through the prestigious UA. Critics all over the world hailed these shorts, with their fluid movements and minimal dialogue, as the answer to the problems of the all-talkie sound film. The studio was among the first to pick up on three-strip Technicolor, beginning with *Flowers and Trees* in 1932. Disney dominated the Oscars' cartoon category with such films as *The Three Little Pigs* (1933), whose song "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" became an anthem of Depression-period America. The firm's huge staff of artists had the leisure and big budgets to create detailed, shaded backgrounds, lots of figure movement, and bright color schemes **(Color Plate 10.5)**.

In 1937, Disney switched to RKO as a distributor—a move that bolstered that shaky firm when it released the first American feature-length cartoon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). Despite being terrified by the witch, children were enchanted by the dwarfs, and the film was a huge hit. The studio continued its series of popular short cartoons, starring Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, and Pluto.

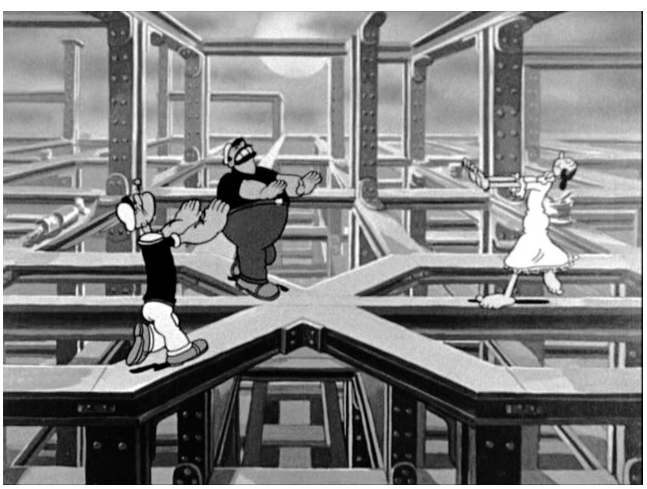
It also planned several additional features. *Bambi* (1942) extended the studio's propensity for realistic backgrounds, with soft pastel paintings for the natural settings **(Color Plate 10.6)**. The film also employed the new *multiplane camera* introduced in *The Old Mill* (1937). This elaborate animation stand allowed the settings and figures to be divided among layers of animation cels. These could be moved frame by frame at varying rates toward or away from the camera, giving a powerful illusion of gliding through a three-dimensional space.

The Disney studio was working at its peak during the early 1940s, making *Pinocchio* (1940) and *Dumbo* (1941) as well as *Bambi*. Part of the staff was diverted to war propaganda and informational films, but full-time work on both features and shorts resumed after 1945.

Other studios found animators who, with more limited means, could imaginatively exploit the cartoon's potential for absurdist illogic and rapid, distorted movements. In 1927, Paramount began releasing films by Max and Dave Fleischer, inventors of the "Out of the Inkwell" series (see The Animated Part of the Program, p. 142). In 1931, they introduced Betty Boop, and Koko the Clown became a supporting character. Betty was a sexy innocent wandering through a variety of adventures, sometimes encountering ghosts and monsters. The Fleischers utilized popular songs; in *Minnie the Moocher* (1932), Cab Calloway's band provides the sound track as Betty explores a scary cave.

Betty had to be toned down considerably after the Hays Code was enforced in 1934. A supporting player who had first appeared in a Betty cartoon of 1933 now became the studio's main star. The gravel-voiced Popeye, with his simple credo ("I yam what I yam and that's all what I yam") and his strengthening cans of spinach, rescued girlfriend Olive Oyl and adopted child Swee' Pea from the villainous Bluto and other menaces (**10.44**).

After the success of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the Fleischers released the feature-length *Gulliver's Travels* (1939), which used realistic rotoscoped movements for the hero and caricatural portrayals for the Lilliputians.



A Dream Walking

10.44 In *A Dream Walking* (1934), Popeye, Bluto, and Olive Oyl all end up sleepwalking on an unfinished skyscraper.

The other Fleischer feature, *Mr. Bug Goes to Town* (aka *Hoppity Goes to Town*, 1941), achieved a more consistent stylized look. By then, however, the brothers had overextended themselves. In 1942, Paramount maneuvered them out of their own animation firm and took over the Popeye series, as well as the Superman series (1941 on). The Fleischers never regained their prominence as animators.

In 1930, Warner Bros. launched its own cartoon unit, headed by former Disney animation team Hugh Harman, Rudolf Ising, and Friz Freleng. Like many early sound cartoons, the Warner Bros. shorts were built around popular songs from the studio's feature musicals. The series was labeled "Looney Tunes," and most of the early entries starred Bosko, an African American boy.

In 1934, Harman and Ising moved to MGM, taking Bosko with them. Over the next few years, Warners hired a new generation of animators who would raise it to the top of the short-cartoon business: Frank Tashlin, Bob Clampett, Tex Avery, and Chuck Jones, who, along with Freleng, each headed a unit within the animation section. The Warners system was more casual than the usual cartoon factory, and this group swapped ideas with a team of writers in informal "jam sessions." They developed superstars Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, and Elmer Fudd.

The Warners group did not have the resources to create detailed backgrounds or elaborate groups of moving figures to match the Disney product. Instead, the animators depended on speed, topicality, and a silly humor that contrasted with the sentimentality and cuteness of most contemporary cartoons. Avery's taste ran to wild visual puns. Clampett specialized in exaggerated reactions and dazzlingly fast motion: in trying to avoid his induction notice in *Draftee Daffy* (1943), Daffy whizzes about his house as a lightning bolt or shower of sparks **(Color Plate 10.7)**.

Many Warners cartoons refer self-consciously to the fact that they are cartoons. In *You Ought to Be in Pictures* (1940, Freleng), Porky decides to become a star in live-action features and quits his job with the Warners animation unit (in a scene with the unit's producer, Leon Schlesinger). In several Warners cartoons, a black silhouette rises up from the audience and interrupts the action; in *Thugs with Dirty Mugs*, a spectator who says he has seen the cartoon before calls the police and informs on the gangsters (**Color Plate 10.8**; note also the caricature of Warners star Edward G. Robinson). Warners shorts appealed as much to adults as to children and became immensely popular.

The same adult appeal was injected into MGM's cartoon series when Tex Avery moved there from Warner Bros. in 1942. Avery created a new repertoire of stars, including an unnamed Wolf, perpetually expressing extravagant (and frustrated) lust for curvaceous heroines. Avery loved dreadful puns, as when the wolf in *The Shooting of Dan McGoo* (1945) has one foot in the grave (a little grave complete with tombstone encloses his boot like a slipper). Avery would continue pushing cartoons to manic limits for a decade after the war.

Hollywood enjoyed great prosperity during the war. That prosperity was to continue briefly after 1945, but later in the decade new challenges would change the film industry profoundly (see Chapter 15).

REFERENCES

1. Martin Quigley, *Decency in Motion Pictures* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 33.
2. William Stull, "Process Cinematography," in Willard D. Morgan, ed., *The Complete Photographer: A Complete Guide to Amateur and Professional Photography*, vol. 8 (New York: National Educational Alliance, 1943), p. 2994.
3. Joseph McBride, *Hawks on Hawks* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 82.
4. Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 83–84.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On Walt Disney: "Uncle Walt the artist"
On two of the best B-film series: "Charlie, meet Kentaro"
On one of the great Warner Bros. animators "Pausing and chortling: A tribute to Bob Clampett"
On style in four 1933 Columbia films: "Daisies in the crevices"
On deep focus before and after *Citizen Kane*: "Foreground, background, playground" and "Welles at 101, KANE at 75 or thereabouts"
On Preston Sturges and the Hays Code: "How he (mostly) got away with it: Matthew H. Bernstein on Preston Sturges" and "On the more or less plausible sneakiness of one Preston Sturges"
On a major producer: "A dose of DOS: Trade secrets from Selznick"
On film noir: "*Reinventing Hollywood* in paperback: Much ado about noir things"

CHAPTER 11

The Stars Look Down

OTHER STUDIO SYSTEMS

Naniwa Elegy

During the 1930s and early 1940s, Hollywood's studio system supported the most successful film industry in the world. Film industries elsewhere took other forms. In some countries, such as the USSR and Germany, state-run monopolies developed during this period (see Chapter 12). In others, such as France and Mexico, small producers renting studio space put out films, often haphazardly, hoping for quick profits. Still other countries had well-developed studio systems that were either imitations of or variants on the Hollywood model. This chapter examines studio systems in four countries: Britain, Japan, India, and China.

QUOTA QUICKIES AND WARTIME PRESSURES: THE BRITISH STUDIOS

In 1936, a British trade paper commented: "When one recalls the wretched, bleak sheds, barns and huts, the mud and general discomfort of many British studios of 15 years ago, it is possible to realize the strides and opportunities of today, when physical hardships are reduced to a minimum thanks to bold and considerate planning."[1] The occasion was the opening of the Pinewood Studios, part of a construction boom in English production centers during the mid-1930s. Two decades after Hollywood cinema began to consolidate its studio system, British film companies finally expanded into a comparable, if smaller, system.

The British Film Industry Grows

What enabled the British film industry to expand at this relatively late date? Midway through the 1920s, fewer than 5 percent of the features released in

Great Britain originated domestically. Responding to this situation, in 1927 the government passed the Quota Act. It required that distributors make a certain percentage of British films available and that theaters devote a minimum portion of screen time to such films. The percentages were to rise over ten years, to 20 percent by 1937.

The result was a sharp rise in the demand for British films. American companies distributing their output in the United Kingdom needed to buy or make films there to meet the quota, and English importers also needed to have a certain amount of domestic footage on offer.

The quota was largely responsible for the British cinema's expansion during the early 1930s. In fact, production increased so much that the quota was consistently exceeded. A considerable portion of production, however, was devoted to *quota quickies*—cheap, short films that barely met the legal requirements for a feature. Many quota quickies sat unseen on distributors' shelves or made up the second half of double features; spectators often walked out after seeing the American film.

The British studio system came to resemble a less stable version of Hollywood's. There were a few large, vertically integrated companies, several midsize firms that did not own theaters, and many small independent producers. Some firms, particularly the smaller ones, concentrated on quota quickies. Other British firms opted to produce films with moderate budgets, aimed at generating a modest profit solely in Britain. A few tried making expensive films, hoping to break into the American market. Although all these companies competed with each other to some extent, they formed a loose oligopoly. Bigger firms commonly rented studio space to each other and to small independents. The quota requirements made room for all.

The two main firms, Gaumont-British and British International Pictures (BIP) had been formed during the silent era but now expanded significantly. BIP's new studio (**11.1**) was the biggest of several in the London suburb of Elstree, which came to be called "the British Hollywood." (As with studios in Los Angeles, British studios were scattered about the outskirts of London.) Both firms practiced a division of labor similar to that used in the Hollywood system, though BIP was particularly noted for rigidly adhering to production roles and discouraging employees' creativity. Both had extensive backlots where large sets could be built (11.1, **11.2**). Gaumont-British and BIP were roughly comparable to the Hollywood Majors in that both were vertically integrated, distributing films and owning theater chains.

There was also a group of smaller firms, somewhat similar to Hollywood's Minors: British and Dominion (headed by Herbert Wilcox), London Film Productions (Alexander Korda), and Associated Talking Pictures (Basil Dean). All produced, some distributed, but none owned theaters. Wilcox made modest films in his studio at Elstree, targeting the British market. Dean called Associated

Fox Photos/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

11.1 An aerial view of British International Pictures' studio complex, built in 1926 and expanded after the coming of sound.

Masheter Movie Archive/Alamy Stock Photo

11.2 Producer Alexander Korda at the left, surveying a set for Michael Powell and Ludwig Berger's *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940) built on the backlot at Denham Studios in England.

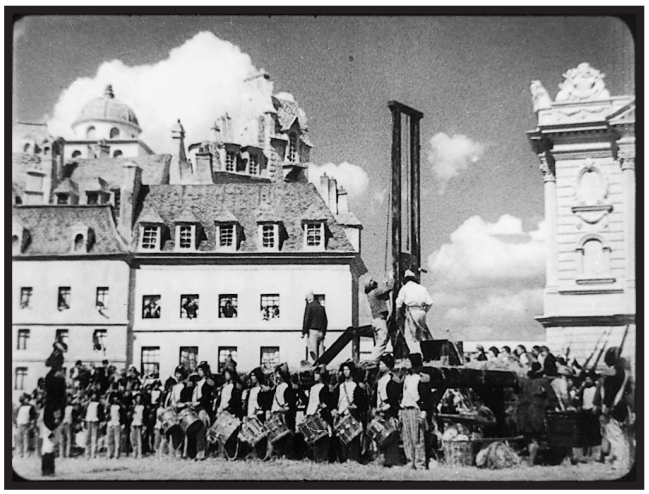
Talking Pictures' Ealing facility "the studio with the team spirit," encouraging filmmakers to make high-quality pictures, often from stage plays.

Export Successes

Korda was the most prominent and influential of these producers in the early 1930s. A Hungarian émigré who had already produced and directed in Hungary, Austria, Germany, Hollywood, and France, he formed London Film in 1932 to make quota quickies for Paramount. Soon, however, he switched to a big-budget approach, hoping to crack the American market. He leased a studio and in 1933 contracted to make two films for United Artists (UA). The first, *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933, Korda) provided a breakthrough for Korda and the British film industry. The film was enormously successful at home, and its profits in the United States topped those of any previous British release. Charles Laughton won a best actor Academy Award and became an international star. UA signed to distribute sixteen more Korda films.

Korda continued making expensive costume pictures, and some other producers imitated him. Korda's fourth film for UA, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1935, Harold Young), was a hit second only to *Henry VIII*. Leslie Howard became known abroad for his portrayal of the seemingly foppish Sir Percey Blakeley, who secretly rescues aristocrats from the guillotine in revolutionary France (**11.3**). At Denham, Korda built Britain's largest studio complex in 1936. Only a few of his epics were spectacularly profitable, however. *Things to Come* (1936, William Cameron Menzies) was set in the future after a disastrous war. The high budget required for the fanciful sets and costumes prevented the film from returning its costs.

The Private Life of Henry VIII started a brief boom in British production. Financiers eagerly provided backing, hoping for more American profits. The most significant figure to take advantage of the new prosperity was J. Arthur Rank, one of the entrepreneurs who started British National Films in 1934. He quickly moved toward vertical integration in 1935 by forming General Film Distributors and building the Pinewood Studios. (Pinewood has



The Scarlet Pimpernel

11.3 Impressive sets and crowd scenes recreated the French Revolution in Korda's production of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

remained one of the world's major production centers; entries in the James Bond, Superman, Batman, Harry Potter, and Star Wars franchises were shot there.) Within a decade, Rank's empire became the most important force in the British film industry.

The production boom made higher-quality filmmaking possible. In 1931, Gaumont-British gained control of a smaller firm, Gainsborough. With it came the talented producer Michael Balcon, who supervised filmmaking for both companies. Despite pressure from the owners to make films with "international" appeal, Balcon fostered distinctive stars and directors who could make specifically British films. These often did better than some of the more expensive, but lifeless, costume films. For example, Gaumont-British made musicals starring the popular Jessie Matthews. Her biggest international hit was *Evergreen* (1934, Victor Saville), in which she plays both the Edwardian music-hall star Harriet Green and her daughter. Years after the mother's retirement and death, the daughter masquerades as the mother, gaining enormous publicity by playing the apparently unaging, "ever green" star (**11.4**).

Evergreen

11.4 *Evergreen* began diminutive song-and-dance star Jessie Matthews's reign as queen of the British musical.

Alfred Hitchcock's Thrillers

Balcon also signed Alfred Hitchcock to a contract with Gaumont-British. Since his success with the early talkie *Blackmail* (see 9.31–9.33), Hitchcock had moved from company to company, trying several genres, including comedies and even a musical. At Gaumont-British (and its subsidiary Gainsborough), he returned to his element, making six thrillers, from the *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) to *The Lady Vanishes* (1938). Hitchcock would become identified with this genre.

One of Hitchcock's strengths was his ability to frame and edit shots in such a way as to allow spectators to grasp characters' thoughts. In *Sabotage* (1935), for example, a woman has just learned that her husband is a foreign agent and has accidentally caused the death of her brother. A lengthy series of shots shows her serving dinner, while anguishing over her brother's death (**11.5–11.10**). Hitchcock's use of characters' viewpoints would remain a defining stylistic trait throughout his career.

Hitchcock's thrillers were also notable for their humor. In *The 39 Steps* (1935), the innocent hero is accused of a murder and flees handcuffed to a woman who believes him guilty. This situation leads to amusing complications and, inevitably, to romance. *The Lady Vanishes* contains similar lighthearted sparring between the hero and heroine (**Video 11.1**), as well as a subplot concerning a pair of obsessive cricket fans who ignore all dangers while trying to learn the outcome of the latest match.

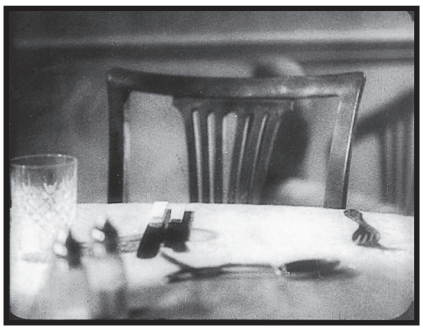
Delightful though Hitchcock's English thrillers are, they betrayed their low budgets and technical limitations. Hitchcock wanted access to better studio facilities and to more dependable financing. In 1939, he signed a contract with David O. Selznick to make films in Hollywood. Beginning with *Rebecca* (1940), which won an Oscar for best picture, Hitchcock stayed in the United States for most of his long career.

Crisis and Recovery

The British production boom suffered a severe setback in 1937. Several producers had received extensive investments and loans but had few profitable films. As a result, sources of funding dried up, and responsible production firms suffered along with opportunists. Alexander Korda's policy of big-budget films had been only partially justified. Despite a few notable successes, the American market remained largely closed to British imports. Moreover, the Quota Act of 1927 was due for renewal. There had been much criticism of the original quota for encouraging quickies. Uncertain over what the new quota would

11.5

11.6


11.7

11.8

11.9

11.10

Sabotage

11.5–11-10 Part of a series of shots in Hitchcock's *Sabotage* that uses subtle variations in framing and eyeline direction. The heroine glances at her brother's empty chair and is tempted to stab her husband, who caused the boy's death.

require, producers delayed projects. Feature output sank during the crisis of 1937–1938.

This crisis triggered changes in the industry. Partly as a result of his extravagance, in late 1938 Korda lost his financial backing. London Film's main asset, the Denham studio, passed into the control of J. Arthur Rank's growing empire. Korda continued producing films, now having to rent space in Denham. During World War II, he spent three years in Hollywood as an independent producer; his films there included Ernst Lubitsch's satire on Nazism, *To Be or Not to Be* (1942). After the war, Korda returned to reorganize London Film Productions. He produced a number of important films up to his death in 1955, but none as influential as those he had made in the 1930s.

The crisis also drove Basil Dean out of film production in 1938. Michael Balcon, after spending an unsatisfying year supervising quota films for MGM, took over Associated Talking Pictures and renamed it Ealing Studios. He continued producing quality films on a small scale, a practice that would gain prominence after the war with the popular Ealing comedies.

Britain's crisis diminished after Parliament passed the Quota Act of 1938. It specified that higher-budget films would count double or in some cases triple toward satisfying quota requirements. The number of quota quickies dropped as both British and American producers attempted to make or purchase films of higher quality to gain extra quota credit.

Film magnate J. Arthur Rank had come through the crisis relatively unscathed, and he rapidly added to his holdings. In 1939, he moved further into vertical integration by purchasing part interest in Odeon Theatres, one of the largest cinema circuits in the United Kingdom. Over the next few years, Rank acquired or built studios until his companies owned more than half of Britain's production space. In 1941, he gained controlling interest in Odeon Theatres and Gaumont-British. Rank also formed Independent Producers, an umbrella company to fund the films of several small firms. From 1941 to 1947, companies in Rank's conglomerate financed about half the films made in Britain.

Owing to the high level of production in Britain during the 1930s, many negligible films were inevitably made. The quota quickies were not entirely pointless, however. For one thing, they kept employment in the film industry high, despite the Depression. For another, they provided a training ground for directors just as films made in Hollywood's B units and Poverty Row studios did. Michael Powell, one of the most important directors of the 1940s and 1950s, had worked extensively in cheap quota films. In *The Night of the Party* (1934, Gaumont-British), using a script which he later called a "piece of junk,"[2] Powell scraped together a cast from the stars under contract to the studio and created a bizarre and amusing film running a mere sixty-one minutes.

Besides the quota quickies, many solid, middle-budget films also gave rise to significant filmmakers. For example, future director David Lean worked during the 1930s as an editor. Carol Reed got his start making films for Basil Dean's Associated Talking Pictures. His breakthrough came with the more ambitious *The Stars Look Down*, made in 1939 for a small independent firm. It drew on important traditions of British documentary and leftist filmmaking (see Chapter 14) to depict the plight of oppressed coal miners and to advocate the nationalization of the industry. At the beginning, a narrator's voice says: "This is a story of simple working people." Location filming in Cumberland loaned the film authenticity (**11.11**), and the climactic coal-mine disaster was convincing, despite being shot in studio sets.

By the end of the 1930s, Britain's film industry had passed through its crisis, and its situation looked promising. World War II was to give it a further boost.

The Effects of the War

For the United Kingdom, the war began on September 3, 1939. Anticipating immediate German bombing, the government closed down all film showings and production. Soon it became clear that such measures were unnecessary, and theaters reopened. Military officials did, however, requisition many of the country's film studios for such wartime uses as supply warehouses. Some of the industry's personnel also went into military service.

Such problems were balanced, however, by a sharp rise in attendance, as people sought to escape the privations of wartime. Theaters stayed open even through aerial bombing during the Battle of Britain in 1940. Despite such hardships, weekly attendance rose from 19 million in 1939 to 30 million in 1945.

The Ministry of Information encouraged wartime filmmaking and even put money into some commercial films. Wartime austerity reduced funding for imported films. Moreover, the new quota was still in effect, and British films were in demand. Because of lack of studio space and personnel, however, far fewer films were made during the war. From between 150 and 200 annually during the mid-1930s, production sank to just under 70 films a year.

Filmmakers patriotically cooperated in creating a positive image of Britain. One of the most memorable was *Went the Day Well?* (1942), produced by Ealing and directed by Alberto Cavalcanti. A Brazilian, Cavalcanti had made experimental films in France's avant-garde during the 1920s (see Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony, p. 157). Moving to Britain, he worked in documentaries during the 1930s and brought a realistic touch to this tale of English villagers resisting German infiltration (**11.12**).

Because of cutbacks on quota quickies, the average budget and quality rose. Some films were polished studio productions comparable to Hollywood's. For example, Thorold Dickinson made *Gaslight* (1940) for Rank's main production firm, British National. A melodrama concerning a wife's fears that her husband is trying to drive her mad, the film used a tight script, three-point lighting, large sets, and other Hollywood-style techniques. A version of the same story was made in 1944 at MGM by George Cukor.

Several independent production companies came to prominence during the war. In 1942, an Italian émigré, Filippo del Giudice, formed Two Cities and persuaded the renowned actor and playwright Noel Coward to script, direct, and star in a film. *In Which We Serve* centers on the crew of a British ship sunk by the Germans. While the survivors cling to a life raft, flashbacks tell their stories, focusing on the upper-class captain, a middle-class officer, and a working-class sailor.

In Which We Serve (codirected by David Lean) emphasizes the parallels among these characters. In one

The Stars Look Down

11.11 Michael Redgrave as the hero of Reed's *The Stars Look Down*, in a scene shot in a Cumberland mining village.

Went the Day Well?

11.12 Nazi infiltrators capture and imprison the villagers in the parish church in *Went the Day Well?*

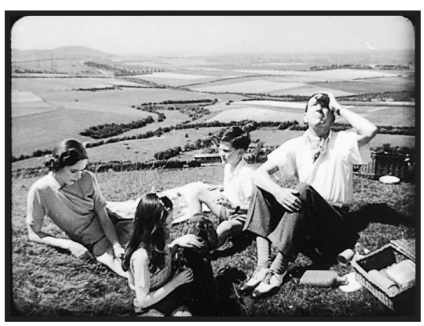
scene, as the captain and his wife and children picnic in the south of England, he watches a dogfight between British and German planes in the sky high above (**11.13**, **11.14**). The wife wistfully remarks that she tries to think of the fights as games so that they won't bother her. Shortly thereafter, in a scene set in the London home of the middle-class officer, his wife and mother-in-law hear bombers approaching. The wife remarks in an annoyed tone, "Oh, there they are again," but soon a low angle shows the two women listening worriedly to the whine of a bomb (**11.15**). Such scenes contribute to the film's treatment of the war as a daily presence for all classes, sometimes remote and sometimes suddenly dangerous.

The popular and profitable *In Which We Serve* attracted Rank, who gained control of Two Cities in exchange for an agreement to finance its subsequent films. These included Lean's *This Happy Breed* (1944), an adaptation of Coward's play *Blithe Spirit* (1945), and Laurence Olivier's first directorial effort, a patriotic Technicolor adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1945). Olivier began the film with a "flying" shot over an elaborate model of Renaissance London, moving down into the Globe Theatre. The opening scenes take place on a reconstruction of the Globe's stage (**Color Plate 11.1**); then, as in the play, the narrator's voice urges us to imagine the wider settings of the historical action. The bulk of the film occurs in stylized studio sets based on medieval illuminated manuscripts. The rousing Battle of Agincourt was the only portion shot entirely on location. *Henry V* celebrated England's ability to triumph against superior forces.

One small but important production firm, The Archers, was formed in 1943 by the team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. After directing quota quickies, Powell had made his first major film, *The Edge of the World* (1937). Shot on a remote island off the western coast of Scotland, it showed how young people's migration to urban areas was depopulating the region. Hungarian-born Pressburger had scripted five Powell-directed films prior to the formation of The Archers. The most prominent of these was *49th Parallel* (1941), a war film financed by the Ministry of Information and J. Arthur Rank. It traces the episodic progress of a band of Nazi infiltrators traveling across Canada (**11.16**). *49th Parallel* was unusual for wartime propaganda, characterizing the German soldiers as fallible individuals rather than inhuman beasts.

The Archers was financed initially by Rank's new Independent Producers Ltd. Rank offered Powell and Pressburger considerable freedom. Their first Archers film, *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), followed a model British soldier through three wars. The film was somewhat critical of the current government, positing that the traditional English values of fair play that had served in earlier combats were inadequate to counter the threat of barbaric Nazis. Like *49th Parallel*, it portrayed a German character in a largely sympathetic light.

In Which We Serve



11.13, 11.14 The contrast of a distant aerial combat and an idyllic family picnic in *In Which We Serve*.

In Which We Serve

49th Parallel

11.15. *left* A parallel low-angle shot implies planes overhead as two women listen anxiously to the unseen attack on their neighborhood (*In Which We Serve*).

11.16. *right* In *49th Parallel*, Leslie Howard plays a British intellectual camping in the Canadian wilderness. Nazis who invade his camp and burn his Picasso painting and copy of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* goad him to defend democracy.

Colonel Blimp was the first of fourteen films that carried the credit "Written, produced and directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger." Although Powell was the director, the phrase indicated that the two were equal partners. Their films were often extremely romantic and even melodramatic, yet outlandish twists of narrative and style set them apart from conventional studio films. *A Canterbury Tale* (1944), for example, a patriotic story set in the traditional center of the Anglican church, weaves together three episodic narrative strands; one focuses on a local magistrate who creeps about pouring glue into the hair of young girls to keep them from distracting soldiers. The collaboration of Powell and Pressburger would remain fruitful until 1956. In general, the strength that the British film industry gained in the 1930s and during World War II continued until the early 1950s.

INNOVATION WITHIN AN INDUSTRY: THE STUDIO SYSTEM OF JAPAN

Britain's studios failed to achieve the stability of Hollywood's, but Japan's film industry succeeded. Its growth after the 1923 Tokyo earthquake and the advent of talking pictures consolidated a studio system much like America's.

Two large, vertically integrated companies, Nikkatsu and Shochiku, dominated several smaller firms. Despite the Depression and the increased expense of sound-film production, feature output remained high (400 to 500 per year in the early 1930s), and new theaters were constantly being built. Most important, Japan was virtually the only country in which US films did not overshadow the domestic product. Nikkatsu and Shochiku could profit from showing Hollywood films in their theaters while limiting American penetration of the market.

A third major player entered the game in 1934. Ichiro Kobayashi, a show-business entrepreneur who mounted extravagant stage revues, formed Toho (Tokyo Takarazuka Theater Company) by buying and merging two small companies specializing in talkies. Along with creating Toho as a production firm, Kobayashi erected movie theaters in Japan's major cities.

While bringing Toho's production up to speed, Kobayashi used imported films to build up attendance at his theaters. He also hired many major directors, such as Teinosuke Kinugasa and the swordfight specialist Masahiro Makino. Toho became Shochiku's chief competitor. Nonetheless, the two vertically integrated companies cooperated to keep Hollywood at bay. Shochiku began to buy up smaller firms to keep pace with Toho, and the expenses of sound filming forced marginal production houses out of business. The industry consequently became more centralized in the course of the 1930s, with three majors and six to ten lesser firms.

The audience's appetite for films remained keen. The Depression was easing by the mid-1930s, and movies had become a central part of urban life. After the 1923 earthquake, the rebuilding of Tokyo had created a cosmopolitan popular culture, and the passion for Western clothes, jazz, whiskey, and fads continued throughout the 1930s. Japanese moviegoers were as familiar with Harold Lloyd and Greta Garbo as they were with their own stars.

Meanwhile, Japan embarked on ambitious military plans. The nation was Asia's dominant power, having defeated China and Russia in war and having annexed Korea. As political parties proved ineffectual, military factions gained influence in government. Some officers argued that modern Japan had to expand its markets and its sources of labor and materials. In 1931, Japan announced its imperialist aims by invading Manchuria.

The search for "national autonomy" led to government regulation of the economy under a declared "emergency"—one that was to last for thirteen years. At first, however, filmmaking and other aspects of popular culture were comparatively unaffected. Censorship was tightened somewhat, but on the whole the genres that had flourished in the 1920s continued to be exploited.

Popular Cinema of the 1930s

The historical film, *jidai-geki*, was still the realm of swordfights, chases, and heroic deaths. The directors Daisuke Ito and Masahiro Makino continued to contribute to the genre, encouraging other filmmakers to use rapid cutting and imaginatively staged fight scenes. Among the many satires of the *chambara* (swordfight films) was Toho's *Enoken as Kondo Isamu* (**11.17**).

More psychologically oriented jidai-geki began to come from younger directors. The most prominent member of this group was Sadao Yamanaka. His *A Pot Worth a Million Ryo* (1935) is a warm comedy in which a gruff samurai befriends an orphan. *Humanity and Paper Balloons* (1937), Yamanaka's most famous film, shows a *ronin* (masterless samurai) unable to find work and eventually driven to suicide. Yamanaka filmed this quietly ironic tale in a distinctive manner, with low camera positions, deep perspectival framings, and somber lighting (**11.18**).

Sabotage

Humanity and Paper Balloons

11.17 *left* The popular vaudeville comedian Enoken plays a reluctant swordsman (*Enoken as Kondo Isamu*).

11.18 *right* The atmospheric tenement setting of the opening discovery of the suicide in *Humanity and Paper Balloons*.

Woman of the Mist

The Stars Look Down

11.19 *left* A young woman in love with a student discovers that he is not interested in her in *Woman of the Mist*.

11.20 *right* In *Street without End*, the young wife, spurned by her husband's family, goes to his sickbed.

This was Yamanaka's last film; drafted and sent to the Chinese front, he died there in 1938.

The *gendai-geki*, or contemporary-life film, included many genres: student and salaryman comedies, the *haha-mono* ("mother tale"), and the *shomin-geki*, films about lower-class life. From the early 1930s through the war, these and kindred genres were the bulwark of the major studios. Shochiku's stars Kinuyo Tanaka and Shin Saburi and Toho's Hideko Takamine and Setsuko Hara made their reputations in these unpretentious films portraying work, romance, and family life in Japan's cities and towns.

Yasujiro Shimazu had helped create Shochiku's "*Kamata* flavor," an atmosphere of poignant cheerfulness associated with the gendai-geki made in the firm's suburban Tokyo studio, and he continued it in such lighthearted talkies as *Our Neighbor Miss Yae* (1934). Heinosuke Gosho, formerly Shimazu's assistant, carried on the Shochiku tradition in the early sound comedies *Madam and Wife* (1931; see Japan, p. 182) and *The Bride Talks in Her Sleep* (1933), as well as in the melodramas *The Dancing Girl of Izu* (1933) and *Woman of the Mist* (1936; **11.19**). In such films Gosho won fame as a master of the shomin-geki.

Also working in the gendai-geki was Mikio Naruse. He started at Shochiku with salaryman films and contemporary comedies before discovering a more astringent, pessimistic tone. *Apart from You* (1933), *Nightly Dreams* (1933), and *Street without End* (1934) won critical praise despite their bleak look at prostitutes, sailors, and struggling single mothers. These melodramas established Naruse as an outstanding director of women, and, in lengthy dissolves and brooding close-ups, revealed his ability to build up a sense of society's suffocating pressures (**11.20**).

Moving to Toho, Naruse quickly established himself with a series of feminine dramas. The most famous was *Wife, Be Like a Rose!* (1935), an urban comedy that modulates into harsh melodrama. Kimiko has picked out a young man to marry, but she must locate her runaway father. She talks him into returning for her wedding. The confrontation between the father and the high-strung mother, who secretly wants him back, shows Naruse's skill in handling complex emotional situations (**11.21**). *Wife, Be Like a Rose!*—one of the few Japanese films of the 1930s to be seen in the West—won critical accolades and established Naruse as a major director.

Wife, Be Like a Rose!

11.21 A high-angle shot of the daughter's grief in *Wife, Be Like a Rose!*

Star Athlete

11.22 A characteristic Shimizu track-back from marching students drilling during a country outing in *Star Athlete*.

The successes of Yamanaka, Gosho, and Naruse confirmed the studios' policies of encouraging directors to specialize in certain genres and to cultivate personal styles. This practice differentiated each company's product and fed fans' interest. In addition, many of the gendai-geki directors had started in the 1920s, when genre innovations and stylistic originality were prized. As a result, Japanese films of the 1930s experimented with storytelling and technique to a degree not common in most Western sound cinema. For example, Tomu Uchida's *Police* (1933) presents a plot straight out of Warner Bros. (two old friends from the neighborhood: one a cop and the other a gangster) but enlivens it with bold compositions, bursts of handheld camerawork, and rapid intercutting between past and present.

Hiroshi Shimizu, another exponent of humanistic comedy, also displayed a distinctive style. His films centering on children (e.g., *Four Seasons of Children*, 1939) won him the most fame, but he also excelled at adult subjects, as seen in *Arigoto-San* (*Mr. Thank You*, 1936) and *Star Athlete* (1937). Shimizu's stylistic signature is the shot in which the action moves straight at or away from the viewer while the camera tracks backward or forward to keep up with the figure (**11.22**). Shochiku's flexible policy allowed Shimizu to travel across Japan in search of ideas, shooting films on location from sketchy notes rather than scripts. The arrangement proved productive: between 1924 and 1945 Shimizu directed more than 100 films.

By common consent, the two most influential Japanese directors of the 1930s were Yasujiro Ozu and Kenji Mizoguchi. They contrasted in almost every way. Ozu worked only for Shochiku, whereas Mizoguchi began with Nikkatsu and became a freelancer. Ozu started in comedies and shomin-geki, and he maintained an everyday humor in virtually all of his films. Mizoguchi, whose first films were melodramas, probed every situation for grim psychological and social implications. Ozu was a master of editing and static, closely framed shots, whereas Mizoguchi cultivated a style of long-shot framings, long takes, and camera movements. On the set, Ozu was quietly insistent, while Mizoguchi exploded into demonic tantrums. Ozu and Mizoguchi illustrate how the Japanese studio system permitted directors an enormous range of originality (see Yasujiro Ozu and Kenji Mizoguchi in the 1930s, p. 219).

Avoiding the strict division of labor practiced in Hollywood, Shochiku and Nikkatsu had cultivated a *cadre system* in which the director and scriptwriter had considerable control over their projects. Supervision tended to be even less stringent at smaller firms. Toho favored a *producer system*, which, like that of Hollywood in the 1930s, placed a producer in charge of several directors at the same time. While Toho films did have a somewhat glossier, mass-manufactured look, directors could still work in idiosyncratic ways at most studios before 1938. After that, they had to face the demands of a nation engaged in total war.

The Pacific War

Japan's all-out attack on China in 1937 marked the beginning of the war in the Pacific. The government banned existing political parties, tightened its alliances with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and mobilized the home front around a war-based economy.

Government Pressure on the Industry The film industry was slowly brought into line with the new policies. In this jingoistic atmosphere, western culture became suspect. Studios were ordered not to feature jazz, American dancing, or scenes that might undermine respect for authority, duty to the emperor, and love of family. In April 1939, Japan's Diet passed a law modeled on Goebbel's edicts to the Nazi industry (see The Nazi Regime and the Film Industry, p. 237). The Motion Picture Law called for nationalistic films portraying patriotic conduct. The Home Ministry established the Censorship Office, which would review scripts before production and order revisions where necessary.

YASUJIRO OZU AND KENJI MIZOGUCHI IN THE 1930s

At age twenty-four Yasujiro Ozu began directing with a jidai-geki, but he quickly turned to the gendai-geki. Between 1928 and 1937, he made thirty-five features, running the gamut from student slapstick (*Days of Youth*, 1929) and the urban comedy of manners (*An Introduction to Marriage*, 1930) to the gangster movie (*Walk Cheerfully*, 1930). He consolidated his fame with three masterpieces in 1933 (*Woman of Tokyo*, *Dragnet Girl*, and *Passing Fancy*). His first sound feature was *The Only Son* (1936), a shomin-geki about a mother following her son to Tokyo to discover that he has not succeeded despite the education she has drudged for years to provide. Ozu characteristically followed this quietly despairing film with a lighthearted satire on the wealthy classes, *What Did the Lady Forget?* (1937).

Ozu was deeply influenced by the Hollywood cinema, particularly the social comedies of Charles Chaplin and Ernst Lubitsch and the gag comedies of Harold Lloyd. Like many Shochiku directors, he adopted the 1920s American comedy style—brief shots of actors and details of setting, edited together crisply. But Ozu extended this style in several ways. At unexpected moments he inserted shots of unobtrusive objects or adjacent landscapes (**11.23**). In dialogue scenes, he systematically filmed from within a 360-degree circle surrounding the characters, changing the view by multiples of 45 degrees (usually 180 degrees). This strategy consistently violated Hollywood's traditional 180-degree continuity editing. Ozu edited as much for visual pattern as for dramatic emphasis; his 360-degree cutting produces close "graphic matches" between two shapes. A graphically continuous version of shot/reverse shot is shown in **11.24** and **11.25**.

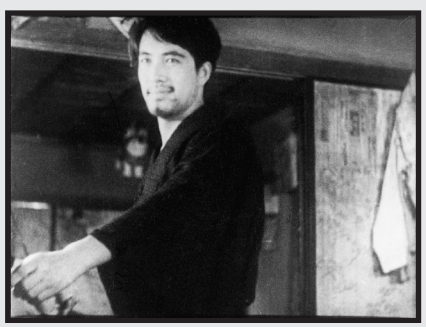
Most strikingly, Ozu refused certain resources of film technique. He was the last major director to convert to sound. He also limited his use of camera movements. Above all, he restricted his camera position by filming only from a low height, regardless of the subject. This tactic again allowed him to draw attention to the composition of the shot, balancing the dramatic value of the actor and the milieu with the purely visual design of the frame (**11.26**).

Ozu's style amplified his intimate dramas. His comedies, like those of Lubitsch and Lloyd, are based on embarrassment and psychological revelation, qualities that could be signaled by a judiciously placed close-up of an expression or a gesture. His social dramas, lingering on the cycle of life within an indifferent city, were intensified by enigmatic urban landscapes (**11.27**).

Several of Ozu's films thoroughly mix comedy and drama. *I Was Born, But ...* (1931), for instance, is at once a satire on the bootlicking salaryman, a comedy about brattish children, and a sober study of lost illusions. At any

Woman of Tokyo

11.23 A boiling teakettle punctuates the drama in Ozu's *Woman of Tokyo*.



Passing Fancy

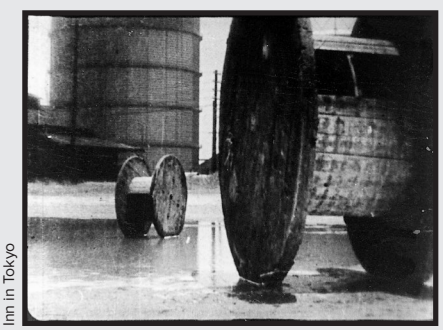
11.24 In *Passing Fancy*, the man grabs the woman's arm as he faces her from the right.

Passing Fancy

11.25 Ozu cuts to a position 180 degrees opposite, showing the man now on the left (*Passing Fancy*).

The Only Son

11.26 Like the previous illustrations, this frame from *The Only Son* exemplifies Ozu's low-height camera.



Inn in Tokyo

11.27 A cutaway to an industrial wasteland in Ozu's *Inn in Tokyo* (1935).

(continued)

YASUJIRO OZU AND KENJI MIZOGUCHI IN THE 1930s, continued

moment, Ozu could create a low-key pictorial joke (**11.28**). His films' poignant evocation of missed opportunities, regrets, and foreknowledge of separation is reinforced by a measured style that finds even the most mundane object an occasion for contemplation. Ozu's distinctive handling of narrative and technique influenced Yamanaka, Shimizu, and Naruse.

Kenji Mizoguchi began directing five years before Ozu. In the high-output 1920s, his forty-two films established him as an eclectic director with artistic ambitions. He made melodramas, crime dramas, even imitations of German Expressionism, but he did not become recognized as a major director until the 1930s.

Across a variety of genres, Mizoguchi concentrated on the social dilemmas facing the Japanese woman. In *The Downfall of Osen* (1935), a gangster's girlfriend sends a young man to medical school; after he has become successful, he finds his benefactor in a railroad station, old and demented. In *Oyuki the Madonna*, a prostitute gives her life to save a rebel leader. Mizoguchi's two outstanding melodramas of the mid-1930s, *Naniwa Elegy* (1936, aka *Osaka Elegy*) and *Sisters of Gion* (1936), show women swapping sexual favors for power, only to find that men will not honor their bargains. He later saw these two bitter films as marking the beginning of his maturity: "It is only since I made *Naniwa Elegy* and *Sisters of Gion* that I have been able to portray humanity lucidly."[3]

Mizoguchi was drawn to situations of high emotion—men's sadistic abuse of women and children, women's distraught response to the threat of poverty or solitude. But in filming he adopted what would, after World War II, be called a "dedramatizing" approach. His staging and framing put scenes of emotional intensity at a distance, inviting the spectator to react less viscerally to the action.

Mizoguchi thus tended to stage highly charged scenes in long shot (**11.29**). Often the characters turn away from the viewer (**11.30**; **Video 11.2**), or they are hidden by a wall or a shadow. Only at the end of *Naniwa Elegy* and *Sisters of Gion* does Mizoguchi give us abrupt,

Sisters of Gion

11.29 In *Sisters of Gion*, Umikichi learns that her sister has been taken to the hospital.

Naniwa Elegy

11.28 Shirts on a clothesline are echoed by the salaryman as he exercises in the morning in *I Was Born, But....*

Naniwa Elegy

11.30 Ashamed, Ayako shrinks away from her lover, and from the viewer, in *Naniwa Elegy*.

intense close-ups of his protagonists, each woman challenging the audience to reflect on why she must suffer (**11.31**).

Moreover, the camera records the action steadily, refusing to cut in to a character's reaction. To an unprecedented extent, Mizoguchi exploited the long take. There are only 270 shots in *Oyuki*, fewer than 200 in *Naniwa Elegy*, and fewer than 125 in *Sisters of Gion.* Further, these long takes are seldom designed to follow the movements of the actors, as in the work of Max Ophüls and Orson Welles. Mizoguchi's static takes force us to watch painful acts of self-sacrifice unfold at a relentless pace.

Ozu and Mizoguchi were among the most honored directors of their day, one representing the heights of the shomin-geki, the other exemplifying a prestigious cinema of social critique. Their work suggests the richness of what came to be recognized as the first golden age of Japanese cinema.

11.31 For the first time in the film, as Ayako is turned out onto the streets by her family, we have a clear frontal view of her in the curt final shot of *Naniwa Elegy*.

As the Chinese war intensified, the government forced the film companies to consolidate. In 1941, authorities agreed to a three-part reorganization. One group was dominated by Shochiku, another by Toho, and a third, unexpectedly, by the small firm of Shinko. Shinko's key executive was Masaichi Nagata (who had produced Mizoguchi's *Naniwa Elegy* and *Sisters of Gion* for his independent firm). Nagata used the consolidation scheme to gain control over Nikkatsu, whose production facilities were absorbed into his group.

Nagata's group was renamed Daiei (for Dai-Nihon Eiga, or "Greater Japan Motion Picture Company"). Nikkatsu was allowed to keep its theater holdings separate, so Daiei initially had difficulties in exhibiting its product. After the war, Daiei would become a major Japanese presence on the international scene.

All companies participated in the war effort. The government supported the production of newsreels, documentary shorts, and films celebrating the uniqueness of Japanese art. The most elaborate example of the last category is Mizoguchi's *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum* (1939), an adaptation of a popular Japanese play. Kikugoro Onoe is expected to become a kabuki actor like his father and uncle, but he is a lackluster performer. When he takes up with the maid Otoku, his family disowns him. Her faith enables him to keep trying to perfect his art. The film won a prize from the Education Ministry.

Mizoguchi's sympathy for women, along with his interest in theatrical performance and stylization, makes *Last Chrysanthemum* one of his most important works. He continued to employ long takes, wide-angle lenses, dramatic chiaroscuro lighting (the use of starkly lit patches in a dark space), and slow rhythm. The camera, poised at a distance, often forces the viewer to scan the frame to pick out the significant action (**11.32**).

11.32 In *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum*, Kikugoro's mother scolds him for associating with the maid Otoku, who watches apprehensively in the background.

Alongside tributes to the purity of Japanese culture were patriotic films supporting the war effort. Tomotaka Tasaka's *Five Scouts* (1939) set the pattern for subsequent efforts, stressing the unity of a fighting group and the quiet heroism of its members. As in many battle films, the enemy is not seen; war is not a sordid struggle among men but a test of the purity of the Japanese spirit. Tasaka's *Mud and Soldiers* (1939) and Kimisaburo Yoshimura's *Story of Tank Commander Nishizumi* (1940) continued to promote the image of the modest, humane soldier.

The jidai-geki adjusted to the war period by becoming statelier and more grandiose. In *The Abe Clan* (1938), family honor vies with friendship in a setting that downplays violence and emphasizes the spectacular beauty and power of the martial code (**11.33**). The gendai-geki celebrated national ideals in a more prosaic way. Because of Kobayashi's ties to government agencies, Toho led the charge with stridently patriotic vehicles. Shochiku offered such films as Shimazu's *A Brother and His Younger Sister* (1939), in which a young man abandons petty office politics and carries his sister and mother off to a fresh start in China; a clod of earth clings to their plane wheel, bringing a bit of Japan to the world they are building.

Austerity and Patriotism In attacking American forces at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Japan declared war on the United States and Britain. Japanese forces seized Western colonies throughout the Pacific and soon dominated East and Southeast Asia. By mid-1942, Japan seemed a new imperial power, holding major islands as well as Siam, Burma (now Myanmar), Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and major portions of China. Japan promised to lead the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," but usually the occupation was at least as harsh as its colonial predecessors.

Patriotic efforts became more shrill. Films celebrated kamikaze raids and the struggle against partisans in China. Toho produced the extravaganza *The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya* (1942), directed by Kajiro Yamamoto and released on the first anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. The film's historical sweep and excellent miniatures and special effects made it an outstanding propaganda piece.

Home-front films continued to emphasize patience, humility, and cheerful stoicism. In Naruse's *Hideko the Bus Conductor* (1941), the gracious heroine (played by the beloved Hideko Takamine) brightens her rural community. *A Diary of Our Love* (1941) shows a husband returning wounded from the war and being nursed back to health by his devoted wife. Shiro Toyoda's direction used Mizoguchi's oblique, long-shot aesthetic to mute the sentimental story (**11.34**).

In such films as *A Diary of Our Love* and Naruse's *Oh, Wonderful Life* (1944), a comic musical that occasionally reverses the sound track, directors continued to explore novel techniques. On the whole, however, most films of the period from 1939 to 1945 are virtually indistinguishable from Hollywood or high-budget European films of the era. The seriousness of the war effort demanded noble, solemn technique, and the daring experimentation of the 1930s was felt to be frivolous. Even Ozu and Mizoguchi toned down their styles for their Pacific War efforts.

The Abe Clan

11.33 A stupendous gathering of the samurai in *The Abe Clan*.

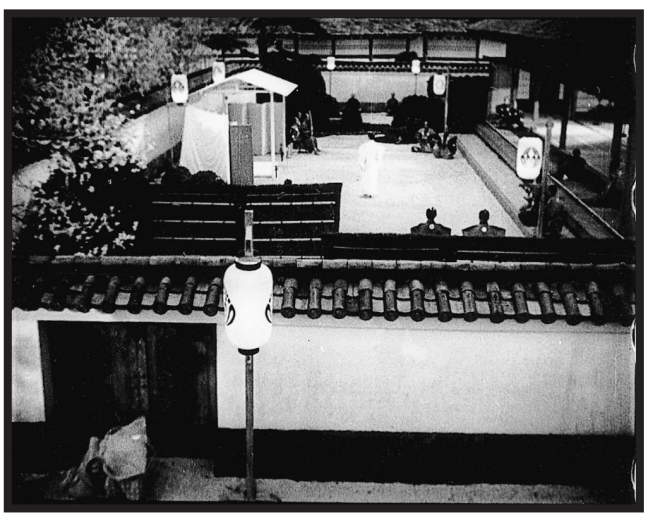
A Diary of Our Love

11.34 The recovering husband in *A Diary of Our Love* watches his wife, framed in a distant window, preparing his food.

Ozu, Mizoguchi, and Kurosawa in Wartime Ozu's output slackened in the war period, when he was repeatedly drafted. His only films were *Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family* (1941) and *There Was a Father* (1942). The first, quite close in plot to Shimazu's *A Brother and His Younger Sister*, shows an upper-class family recalled to its duty by the youngest members. While carrying a serious message, the film contains Ozu's characteristically quirky comedy. *There Was a Father* proved more severe; not a trace of humor enlivens this tale of a teacher who sacrifices himself to the greater national need. After *There Was a Father*, Ozu was captured in Singapore while planning a battlefront film and spent the remainder of the hostilities as a prisoner of war.

Mizoguchi fared better. He was entrusted with one of the most prestigious projects of the war, a two-part version of a classic tale of self-sacrifice. *Genroku Chushingura* (aka *The Loyal Forty-Seven Ronin*, 1941 and 1942) tells how a lord's retainers patiently suffer indignity before avenging his death.

Earlier film versions told the story with vigorous swordplay and overblown emotions. Predictably, Mizoguchi dedramatized the tale. For three hours he dwells on the ronin's slow preparation for the deed, their calm acceptance of their mission, and their resignation to their ultimate punishment. The long take is carried to extremes, both films totaling only 144 shots (making each shot, on average, over ninety seconds long). The climactic battle takes place offscreen, recounted through a letter read by the lord's widow. Mizoguchi's long takes, monumental compositions, and majestic crane shots ennoble a drama of fidelity to duty (**11.35**).



Genroku Chushingura

11.35 A retainer weeps at the lower left while his lord goes into a garden to be executed in *Genroku Chushingura*.

Of the several directors who made their debuts during the war, the most promising was Akira Kurosawa. A scriptwriter and assistant director at Toho, he worked for Kajiro Yamamoto before being entrusted with directing *Sanshiro Sugata* (1943), a tale of martial arts set in the late nineteenth century. *Sanshiro* brings hurly-burly action back to the period film, which had become static and solemn under the influence of wartime ideology. The plot centers on a classic martial-arts conflict: Sanshiro, a hotheaded young judo fighter, must learn restraint under the guidance of a harsh but wise master. Kurosawa handled the combat sequences with a kinetic bravura, using elliptical editing, slow motion, and sudden changes of angle (**11.36**, **11.37**). *Sanshiro Sugata* was a major influence on postwar jidai-geki films, and it was the ancestor of Hong Kong martial-arts films and the "spaghetti Westerns" of Sergio Leone.

The film's success led Kurosawa to make a sequel (*Sanshiro Sugata II*, 1945). More significant, however, was his second film, the home-front drama *The Most Beautiful* (1944). Several women are working at a plant that manufactures precision lenses for airplanes' gunsights. The plot shows, in episodic fashion, a string of personal dramas, some comic, some intensely serious. *The Most Beautiful* and the judo films fitted wartime ideology, but they also showed Kurosawa to be a virtuoso, emotionally intense director.

Sanshiro Sugata

11.36 One of Sanshiro's opponents is hurled endlessly through the air ... (*Sanshiro Sugata*).

Sanshiro Sugata

11.37 ... before crashing against a wall, causing a window frame to float down in slow motion.

Gradually, three years of Allied "island hopping" pushed Japan's forces back. In August 1945, after months of firebombing Tokyo and other cities, US planes dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered soon afterward.

Like most of the nation's institutions, the film studios were hard-hit, but even the devastation of the war and the reforms of American occupation could not loosen the major companies' grip on the industry. The Japanese studio system would retain control for three more decades.

INDIA: AN INDUSTRY BUILT ON MUSIC

In India, with twelve major languages and twenty secondary ones, the silent cinema was a widely accessible entertainment. The films took their plots from well-known tales in the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the images carried the burden of the story. Although intertitles were in as many as four languages, and sometimes a narrator akin to the Japanese benshi accompanied screenings, the Indian silent film found a national audience. Following the work of D. G. Phalke in the 1910s (see An International Style, p. 42), several production companies sprang up in Bombay (now Mumbai) and Calcutta (now Kolkata). By the mid-1920s, India was producing more than a hundred feature films annually, more than England, France, or the USSR.

A Highly Fragmented Business

Indian producers sought to imitate Hollywood's studio system, but they could not achieve vertical integration. In an attempt to do so, Madan Theatres, the most powerful exhibition chain at the end of the 1920s, bought American sound equipment and built a studio in the Calcutta suburb of Tollygunge (soon known as "Tollywood"). It released the first Indian talking films in 1931, but problems of cash flow forced Madan to sell its studio and most of its theaters. Thereafter, the Indian market would be a free-for-all in which production firms, distributors, and exhibitors vied for power.

The fragmentation of the market was increased by the coming of sound, which broke the national audience into language-based groups. Calcutta firms monopolized Bengali-language production, Bombay controlled production in Marathi, and both cities made films in Hindi, India's principal language. Slowly some production emerged in Madras (now Chennai), specializing in southern languages.

At first, producers controlled the market. The earliest talking feature, the Imperial Film Company's *Alam Ara* ("Beauty of the World," 1931, Hindi language) proved a huge success, and other producers quickly converted to sound. The major firms were Prabhat, founded in 1929 and operating outside Bombay; New Theatres, founded in 1930 in Calcutta; and Bombay Talkies, founded in 1934. All were modeled on Hollywood studio complexes, with sound stages, laboratories, and commissaries. Although the producers sought to imitate Hollywood's efficient planning and scheduling, they prided themselves on running friendly, "one-big-family" operations.

By the mid-1930s, film companies were turning out a total of about 200 films a year, most of them in Hindi. Although the number of theaters increased throughout the 1930s and 1940s, it did not keep pace with the expansion of production or the growing urban population. Exhibitors competed frantically to show the most popular movies. Production companies manipulated the theater owners through block booking.

Mythologicals, Socials, and Devotionals

The success of the Indian talking picture owed much to its musical sequences. Folk performance and Sanskrit theater were based on music, and these traditions found their way into the cinema. For decades, nearly all films, regardless of genre, contained song and dance interludes. An early and influential example is *Chandidas* (1932, Debaki Bose; Bengali; **11.38**). It featured both songs and a continuous musical background in the manner of Hollywood underscoring. Initially, most stars sang their own parts, but, during the 1940s, firms began to use *playback singers*, who prerecorded the songs for the actors.

Chandidas

11.38 *Chandidas*: The low-caste woman sings with the holy man before his altar.

The genres of the 1930s had been established in the silent era. The *mythological film*, using a plot derived from legend and the literary epics, had been a mainstay since Phalke's day. More Westernized were the *stunt films*, adventure stories modeled on those starring Douglas Fairbanks and Pearl White. Most were cheap productions akin to Hollywood's B pictures; those featuring the masked outlaw woman Nadia were especially popular.

The *social film*, a romantic melodrama set in contemporary times, was introduced in the mid-1920s and became an important genre in the sound era. One of the most famous socials was New Theatres' *Devdas* (1935; Hindi), which used naturalistic dialogue to show the suffering of lovers torn apart by an arranged marriage. Other socials addressed contemporary problems of labor, the caste system, and gender equality.

Another major genre was the *devotional*, a biographical tale of a religious figure. The most popular was *Sant Tukaram* ("Saint Tukaram," 1936, Mohan Sinha; Marathi), made by Prabhat. A poor villager who spends his days singing holy songs is persecuted by the corrupt Brahmin priest. Tukaram's faith creates several miracles, and he is eventually taken to Nirvana in a heavenly chariot (**11.39**). The hero's gentle personality, the understated performances, and the lyrical beauty of the songs, nearly all composed by the historical saint, led many critics to judge *Sant Tukaram* the masterpiece of 1930s Indian filmmaking.

Independents Weaken the System

By 1939, the film industry was apparently robust. Although the market was still dominated by foreign films, the rise of the talkie had greatly increased audiences for local cinema. India had become the third-largest film producer in the world, and *Sant Tukaram* won a prize at the Venice Film Festival. The mobilization for World War II improved the national economy.

The wartime boom also revealed, however, that the film industry was fundamentally unstable. In search of quick profits, entrepreneurs began to form independent production companies, and black marketers used film projects to launder cash. The independents lured stars, directors, and songwriters away from the studios, often paying bonuses in under-the-table deals. Now the older firms had to compete for personnel, and a star might consume half a film's budget. The studios' one-big-family ideology collapsed when stars and creative personnel realized their market value. Moreover, the independents did not have to maintain the massive overhead that encumbered the studios; a producer could simply rent studio space and hire personnel as needed. Now that more companies were offering more films, distributors and theater owners could make the studios compete for screens.

The failure to achieve vertical integration proved fatal to the big companies. Prabhat, New Theatres, and Bombay Talkies made films throughout the war, but their power ebbed. Only the government's wartime restrictions on investment and raw film stock kept the transient "mushroom producers" from overrunning the market. Once the war was over, black-market profiteering ran unchecked. Although film production expanded and became even more significant internationally, India's efforts toward a studio system were at an end.

Sant Tukaram

11.39 The bird-chariot that carries the hero to heaven at the climax of *Sant Tukaram*.

CHINA: FILMMAKING CAUGHT BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT

For a brief period during the 1930s, Chinese film entrepreneurs struggled to create a small studio system. During the 1920s, production had been spread mostly among many small companies. The market was largely supplied by imports, principally US films. In 1929, only 10 percent of the 500 films released were made in China. The introduction of sound, however, gave a little boost to domestic filmmaking: while educated urban audiences were used to western culture, many workers and peasants wanted more familiar fare that did not require subtitles, which few could read.

There were two relatively large Chinese firms, though neither owned theaters. The Mingxing Film Company had been founded in 1922 in Shanghai, the center of Chinese film production. By the 1930s, it was the largest producer.

In 1930, a former cinema owner started the Lianhua Film Company, Mingxing's primary competitor. Smaller companies mostly turned out melodramas patterned after popular literature.

The political temper of the times, however, injected controversy into this system. Chiang Kai-shek had seized power in a bloody coup d'état in 1927, establishing the right-wing Guomindong government. The government's forces were engaged in an armed conflict with Mao Zedong's Communist insurgents, who controlled portions of the country outside the largest cities. In 1931, when the Japanese invaded Manchuria and overran other portions of the country, Chiang Kai-shek mistakenly decided that it was more important to fight the Communists than the Japanese. In this atmosphere, a split developed between right-wing nationalists on the side of the Guomindong and leftists who, while not Communists, sympathized with the oppressed working and peasant classes.

These two groups struggled to control the output of the budding studios. In 1932, a Communist cultural group, the League of Left-Wing Writers, formed the Film Group to guide and encourage leftists in the film industry. Although most of the members were screenwriters, many important actors and directors also belonged. They were not necessarily Communists but typically came from urban, middle-class backgrounds. They were thoroughly familiar with Western filmmaking. Although they never came to dominate the film industry, they were to create some of the decade's most significant films.

The right-wing nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek set up strict censorship to control the cinema. As a result, leftists in the studios had to craft their films subtly to convey their ideas. The leader of the Film Group, scenarist Xia Yan, became head of the script team at the Mingxing company. His adaptation of a novel, *Spring Silkworms* (1933, Cheng Bugao), was the first major left-wing film of the decade. It follows a peasant family during the yearlong cycle of raising worms and harvesting silk. At the end, the family suffers through an unfair drop in silk prices. The emphasis on the dignity of labor and on the plight of peasants made this a controversial film. Although left-wing films were popular, they created censorship problems. Xia Yan was fired from the Mingxing company the following year and moved to Lianhua.

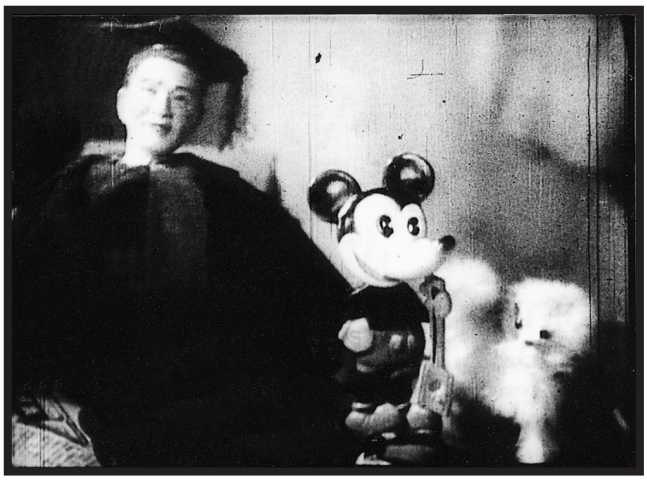
The owner of Lianhua, the second-largest company, was loyal to Chiang's nationalist cause, and the Film Group found it harder to infiltrate the firm. Nevertheless, one of its three production units was dominated by leftists in the early 1930s. Lianhua released two important liberal films in 1934. The first was *The Goddess*, written and directed by Wu Yonggang. In Chinese, *goddess* was the term for a prostitute, and the story treats the heroine in a straightforward fashion rather than creating a melodrama (**11.40**). She struggles against an unjust society, saving money to send her son through school; when her money is stolen, she kills her thieving pimp (**Video 11.3**). The second film, *The Highway* (aka *The Big Road*, directed by Sun Yu), follows a group of unemployed men as they get jobs constructing a road that will serve as a defense against the Japanese invaders. The film emphasizes their friendship and the joys of physical labor.

China's three smaller companies reflected the struggle between right-wing and left-wing tendencies in more extreme ways. Yihua was dominated by members of the Film Group from its founding in 1932. The following year, right-wing extremists destroyed its filmmaking facilities, but the company rebuilt, producing more innocuous fare from 1934 on. The Diantong firm was even more overtly leftist in its orientation; after it had produced only four films, the government shut it down. Xinhua, founded in 1935 by right-wing extremists, met no opposition.

In 1937, the left-wing elements of the Chinese cinema seemed to be in resurgence. Xia Yan was rehired by the Mingxing company, which produced two extremely popular, controversial films. *Street Angels* (Yuan Muzhi) combined influences from Frank Borzage melodramas and René Clair musicals to portray the lives of an itinerant trumpet player and his friends, living opposite a prostitute and her sister. The cheerful treatment of the characters' lives is belied by the ending, in which the prostitute is killed by the gang that controls her, and the other characters are left with little hope of a better life.

The Goddess

11.40 *The Goddess* featured Ruan Lingyu, the wildly popular star whose death at age 25 devastated Chinese audiences.


Crossroads

11.41 An ironic juxtaposition of a doll in a college graduate's gown with a Mickey Mouse figurine in the hero's apartment (*Crossroads*).

Crossroads (Shen Xiling) follows the lives of four graduates who cannot find jobs (**11.41**). The protagonist feuds with the unseen woman in the flat next to his, unaware that she is the worker he has been interviewing to write an exposé on factory conditions (and with whom he has fallen in love). The ending implies that the couple will go off to join the Communists in fighting the Japanese.

Such films suggest that the Chinese film industry might have expanded in the late 1930s. In 1937, however, the Japanese overran Shanghai. All the producers except Xinhua ceased production (Xinhua closed in 1942). China's filmmakers dispersed, some going to the few areas of the country under Communist control, others fleeing to Guomindong territory. Many of those who had worked at the Mingxing Film Company would become important filmmakers in the era just after the Communist Revolution of 1949.

Our four examples—Britain, Japan, India, and China—illustrate how studio systems of filmmaking took various forms. A group of filmmaking firms could form a solid oligopoly, with some companies being vertically integrated. In Britain and Japan, the larger firms distributed their own films and owned theater chains. The scale of production and the power of domestically made films in the local market helped determine how stable such a system would be. India's studio system was more artisanal, with many producers competing against each other. The Chinese industry struggled to develop in a way that imitated western models, only to be overwhelmed by political circumstances. In Chapter 12, we shall examine how other film industries functioned under political dictatorships.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Robert Murphy, "A Rival to Hollywood? The British Film Industry in the Thirties," *Screen* 24, nos. 4/5 (July/October 1983): 100.
2. Michael Powell, *A Life in Movies: An Autobiography* (London: Heinemann, 1986), p. 231.
3. Quoted in Peter Morris, *Mizoguchi Kenji* (Ottawa: Canadian Film Archive, 1967), p. 10.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On Japanese director Shimizu Hiroshi: "Pierced by poetry"
On *Went the Day Well?*: "Cavalcanti + Ealing = a little-known gem"
On Mizoguchi: "Mizoguchi: Secrets of the exquisite image"
On Kurosawa: "Kurosawa's Early Spring" and "Action and Essence: Kurosawa's SANSHIRO SUGATA on the Criterion Channel"
On Ozu: "A Modest Extravagance: Four Looks at Ozu"

CHAPTER 12

The Rainbow

CINEMA AND THE STATE: THE USSR, GERMANY, AND ITALY, 1930–1945

La Signora di tutti

During the 1930s, left- and right-wing dictatorships controlled a few national film industries, most notably in the USSR, Germany, and Italy. The governments treated cinema as a medium of propaganda and entertainment, and both these functions continued during World War II.

Government control took different forms. Under the Communist system imposed by the Russian Revolution, the film industries of the various regions that made up the USSR were nationalized in 1919. That centralized control increased during the 1930s. By contrast, the Nazi regime that came to power in Germany in 1933 supported capitalism, so it did not seize the privately owned film industry. Instead, the Nazis nationalized the industry by quietly buying companies. In Fascist Italy, the situation was quite different. There the government supported the industry and censored films, but it did not nationalize production.

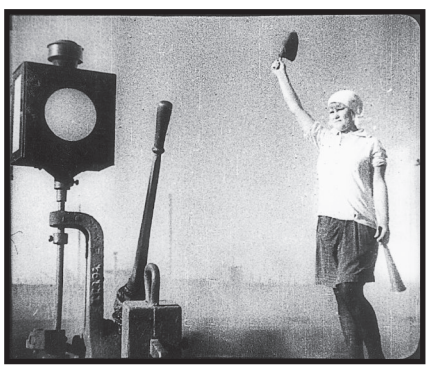
THE SOVIET UNION: SOCIALIST REALISM AND WORLD WAR II

The First Five-Year Plan centralized the Soviet film industry under one company, Soyuzkino, in 1930 (see The First Five-Year Plan and the End of the Montage Movement p. 120). The purpose was to make the industry more efficient and to free the USSR from having to import equipment and films. To dominate the home market, the industry had to make more. In late 1931, new factories began manufacturing raw stock but of a quality and quantity far below the industry's objectives. Filmmakers preferred to shoot on imported stock when possible, and imports dwindled slowly during the decade. Shortages of film, scarcity of equipment, a lack of money, and inefficiency continued to plague the industry for decades. As we have seen, technical problems also made the introduction of sound a slow process (see The USSR Pursues Its Own Path to Sound p. 178).

From 1930 to 1945, controls on the types of films being made were tightened. Boris Shumyatsky, head of Soyuzkino at its formation, was directly responsible to the country's leader, Joseph Stalin, who took a great interest in the cinema. Shumyatsky favored entertaining, easily comprehensible films, and under his regime the avant-garde Montage movement died out. In 1935, he oversaw the introduction of the doctrine of Socialist Realism into the cinema.

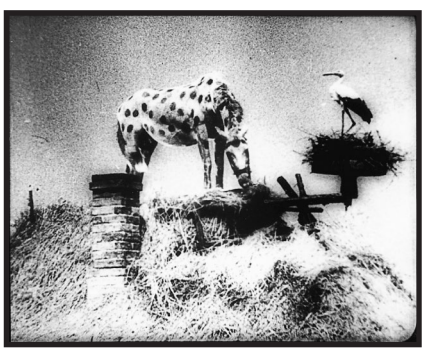
Films of the Early 1930s

Before the introduction of Socialist Realism, several significant films appeared. *Men and Jobs* (1932, Alexander Macheret) combined the Montage style with an emphasis on production reflecting the First Five-Year Plan. An American expert arrives to help build a dam. His initial condescension breaks down, and he decides to stay on and help the new Soviet state (**12.1**). A more unusual film was made by Alexander Medvedkin, who spent the early 1930s traveling in a train, shooting and showing films in villages throughout the Soviet Union. His early shorts made in this fashion do not survive, but his feature, *Happiness* (1934), does. A peasant, Kymyr, resists the reforms of the Russian Revolution and seeks happiness through personal wealth, while his oppressed wife, Anna, enters a collective farm and persuades Kymyr to join her. Medvedkin uses comic exaggeration to portray the initial poverty of the couple and the stupidity of soldiers and priests (**12.2**).



Men and Jobs

12.1 A heroic image of Soviet labor in *Men and Jobs*.



Happiness

12.2 Stylization in *Happiness*: the hero and heroine's poverty leads their horse to graze on their thatched roof.

The Doctrine of Socialist Realism

From 1928, Joseph Stalin ruled the USSR as an absolute dictator, and harsh repression enforced government policy. The secret police ferreted out dissent in all walks of life. To consolidate his power, Stalin purged those seen as disloyal to the state. Many thousands were imprisoned, exiled, or executed. This reign of terror peaked in 1936–1938 with "show trials" in which party leaders made scripted confessions of their participation in "counterrevolutionary" activities.

Socialist Realism was an artistic approach introduced at the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress. A. A. Zhdanov, a cultural official, explained,

> Comrade Stalin has called our writers engineers of human souls. What does this mean? What duties does the title confer upon you?
>
> In the first place, it means knowing life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, not to depict it in a dead, scholastic way, not simply as "objective reality," but to depict reality in its revolutionary development.[1]

Writers and artists in all media were required to serve the Communist party's goals in their work and to follow a set of vague official tenets. This policy would remain more or less strictly in force until the mid-1950s.

Artists were forced to accept Socialist Realism as the only correct style. Sergei Eisenstein's mentor, the leading theatrical director, Vsevolod Meyerhold, disappeared during the 1936–1938 purges. Major writers such as Sergei Tretyakov and Isaac Babel were secretly executed. Composer Dmitri Shostakovich chafed under the Socialist Realist doctrine but had to obey it. Film soon took up the new doctrine.

Socialist Realism became official policy in the cinema in January 1935, at the All-Union Creative Conference of Workers in Soviet Cinema. The film *Chapayev*, which had premiered only two months earlier, was referred to throughout the conference (see Socialist Realism and *Chapayev* box). By contrast, Eisenstein was singled out for attack, in an obvious effort to discredit the Montage movement. Other "formalist" directors were forced to admit past "mistakes"; Lev Kuleshov declared, "Like my other colleagues whose names are linked with a whole series of failed productions, I want, whatever the cost, to be, and I shall be, an outstanding revolutionary artist but I shall only be one when my flesh and blood, my whole organism and being are merged with the cause of the Revolution and the Party."[2] Despite this self-abasement, Kuleshov also offered an eloquent defense of the beleaguered Eisenstein.

SOCIALIST REALISM AND *CHAPAYEV*

The central tenet of Socialist Realism was *partiinost'*—roughly, "party-mindedness." That is, artists had to propagate the Communist party's policies and ideology. The models for this were the European realist novelists of the nineteenth century. Authors such as Honoré de Balzac and Stendhal had criticized bourgeois society. Of course, Soviet authors were not supposed to be critical of socialist society. Unlike critical realism, Socialist Realism was based on a second tenet: *narodnost'*. This term (roughly, "people-centeredness") means that artists should depict the life of ordinary people in a sympathetic way.

Socialist Realist artworks were supposed to be free from *formalism*, stylistic experiments or complexities that would make them hard to understand. Thus, Socialist Realism ruled out the Montage style of filmmaking. In order to serve the party and the people, art was supposed to educate and provide role models, particularly in portraying a "positive hero."

The *realism* in Socialist Realism was based in part on Frederick Engels's equation of truth with the "reproduction of typical characters in typical circumstances." For Stalinists, *typical* designated traits associated with Communist ideals, not with the way things actually are. This means that many Socialist Realist artworks give an optimistic, idealized image of Soviet society, far removed from actual life under Stalin. As party goals changed over the years, so did Socialist Realism, and proper artistic methods were endlessly debated.

Although some traits associated with Socialist Realism had already appeared in cinema, the first film to provide a complete model of the new doctrine was *Chapayev* (1934, Sergei and Georgy Vasiliev). Based on a fictionalized account of an actual officer in the civil war, *Chapayev* furnished a hero for audiences to admire. Moreover, Chapayev's cheerful, handsome assistant, Petja, is a "typical" (i.e., idealized) working-class figure with whom people could identify (**12.3**). He provides a romantic subplot as well, flirting with Anna, a female soldier. In an association of romance and work that was common in Soviet films, the two fall in love as Petja teaches Anna to fire a machine gun. *Chapayev* told its story in simple terms. When Chapayev explains a point of military strategy to another officer, he lays out small potatoes to represent the soldiers, with a large potato for the commander (**12.4**).

Chapayev was an enormous success, both with audiences and with film officials promoting Socialist Realism. Shumyatsky praised its concentration on individual characters, contrasting it with the mass heroes in Montage films of the 1920s. He also pointed out that the film does not hide the hero's faults. At first, Chapayev is shown as unschooled in military history, and he follows his own impulses rather than obeying orders calculated to benefit the Bolshevik cause. Shumyatsky declared that Chapayev "presents himself at the beginning of the film as a typical 'innate' bolshevik."[3] Indeed, *Chapayev* follows one of the most common patterns of Socialist Realist narratives, that of a protagonist who learns to subordinate his or her desires to the people's good. *Chapayev* became one of the most influential films in the history of the Soviet cinema.

Chapayev

12.3 This framing of Chapayev and Petja against the sky became the most famous image of the Soviet Socialist Realist cinema (*Chapayev*).

Chapayev

12.4 Chapayev's use of potatoes to explain military technique showed how a film could employ familiar means of storytelling that peasants and workers could grasp (*Chapayev*).

Filmmakers could not hope to keep a low profile. Stalin was very interested in the cinema, and viewed many films in his private quarters. Shumyatsky, as Stalin's direct representative, ruled the industry. There was an elaborate censorship apparatus, whereby film scripts had to be reviewed repeatedly before being accepted. After shooting began, films could also be revised or shelved at any stage. This cumbersome bureaucratic system, and the fact that most scripts were rejected, slowed output; throughout the 1930s, the number of finished films remained far below the total planned. A film might take years to make, undergoing minute ideological scrutiny. The most spectacular case of such interference came with Eisenstein's first Soviet sound project, *Bezhin Meadow*, which Shumyatsky shelved in 1937.

Relatively few filmmakers suffered the most extreme penalties of the purges. There were several victims, however. For example, critic and scenarist Adrian Piotrovsky, who had scripted Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg's 1926 Montage film *The Devil's Wheel*, was arrested in 1938 and died in a prison camp. Cinematographer Vladimir Nilsen, a student of Eisenstein's, disappeared. Konstantin Eggert, a traditional director, was prevented from making any films after 1935.

Hoping to boost production and create a popular cinema, Shumyatsky decided to build a "Soviet Hollywood." He spent two months touring the American studios in 1935 and determined to replicate their technical sophistication and efficiency. His grand expansion project progressed during 1937, but it was never completed. Indeed, Shumyatsky never raised production to the level called for in the Five-Year Plans. Although more than a hundred films were scheduled in most years, actual release figures came to less than half that.

Ironically, the final result of Shumyatsky's policies was his own arrest in January 1938. One of the reasons cited for his removal from power was the waste of money and talent in the abandonment of *Bezhin Meadow*. He became the film world's most prominent victim of the purges when he was executed later in 1938. From that point on, Stalin played an even more central role in making decisions about the ideological acceptability of films.

The Main Genres of Socialist Realism

Civil War Films *Chapayev*'s huge success made the *civil war film* an important genre of Socialist Realist cinema. Although the Civil War had caused great hardships, many veterans looked back on it as a pre-Stalinist era when Communist goals were clear-cut and rapid changes were possible. *We from Kronstadt* (1936, Yefim Dzigan) is virtually a loose remake of *Chapayev*, although its hero is not based on a historical figure. It is set in 1919, during heavy fighting around Kronstadt. The sailor Balachov is initially undisciplined, accosting a woman on the street and only reluctantly sharing his rations with the workers and children of nearby Petrograd. Gradually, after escaping execution by the White troops and enduring hardships in battle, he learns to fit selflessly into the revolutionary cause (**12.5**).

We from Kronstadt

12.5 Soviet films of the 1930s continued to use the dynamic low-angle framings that had originated in the silent era. This shot from *We from Kronstadt* suggests the protagonist's innate heroism.

Biographical Films *Chapayev* also helped make the *biographical film* a major genre. Famous figures of the revolution and Civil War eras were often the focus, but films dealt increasingly with great people of the prerevolutionary era, even tsars. Although the USSR was supposedly becoming a classless society, this period saw the development of a "cult of personality." Stalin was hailed as the embodiment of Communist ideals, and historians exaggerated his role in the revolution. Because Stalin saw parallels between himself and great leaders of Russia's past, these men became suitable subject matter for laudatory films.

Important intellectuals who supported the revolution also furnished the basis for biographical films. *Baltic Deputy* (1937, Alexander Zarkhi) is set directly after the October Revolution and gives a fictionalized account of a scientist-professor who welcomed the Bolshevik regime, braving the scorn of his colleagues. In fact, many intellectuals had resisted the revolution, but *Baltic Deputy* aimed to show that all classes could unite under Communism.

Baltic Deputy

12.6 An idealistic image of solidarity across social classes, as the scientist-hero of *Baltic Deputy* lectures on botany to attentive revolutionary sailors.

Alexander Nevsky

12.7 Grotesque helmets dehumanize the Teutonic invaders in *Alexander Nevsky*.

Shchors

12.8 Dovzhenko balances a tall sun-flower against an explosion in the opening shot of *Shchors*.

The professor makes friends with a group of sailors (**12.6**). In the end his book is published, and Lenin sends him a congratulatory letter.

Stalinist historians singled out two tsars, Ivan the Terrible and Peter I, as "progressive" rulers who carried out reforms that constituted important steps away from feudal society and toward capitalism. Their actions thus helped prepare the way for Communism.

Vladimir Petrov's two-part epic, *Peter the First* (1937 and 1938), established some important conventions for "great leader" films. Although a monarch, Peter is also a man of the people. He leads armies in battle and makes shrewd diplomatic moves but is not above carousing in taverns with his men or hammering vigorously in a blacksmith shop.

Such conventions appear again in the film that returned Eisenstein to the forefront of the Soviet cinema, *Alexander Nevsky* (1938). Nevsky was a medieval prince who had led a defense of Russia against European invaders. The similarities to the contemporary situation, with Nazi Germany threatening war, made *Alexander Nevsky* a major patriotic project. The film's anti-German tone was clear (**12.7**). At the end, Nevsky speaks directly to the camera: "Those who come to us with sword in hand will perish by the sword."

Eisenstein's first completed sound film fit into the doctrine of Socialist Realism: its simple narrative glorified the accomplishments of the Russian people. Nevsky, like Tsar Peter, mingles with the peasants and bases his strategy on a joke he hears by a campfire. Eisenstein also managed, however, to preserve traces of the Montage experimentation of the 1920s. Several shots may show the same action with different framings, and many cuts yield discontinuities. The renowned sequence of the battle on an ice-covered lake is a virtuoso piece of extended rhythmic editing. Sergei Prokofiev's music helped smooth over the eccentric editing style and enhanced the legendary, larger-than-life qualities of the film.

In early 1935, Stalin remarked to Alexander Dovzhenko, "Now you must give us a Ukrainian *Chapayev.*"[4] The subject was to be the Ukrainian civil war hero Nikolai Shchors. Of course Dovzhenko took this suggestion as a mandate. Over the next few years, he worked on the project, constantly scrutinized by Stalin and lesser officials. *Shchors* (1939) displays Dovzhenko's typical lyricism, especially in the startling opening scene of a battle erupting in a field of sunflowers (**12.8**).

Vsevolod Pudovkin contributed to this genre with *Suvorov* (1941), which deals with the late years of a famous general in the wars against Napoleón. The opening scene is typical of such films (**12.9**). Again, although Suvorov is of noble origins, he fraternizes with the common people. He wins his battles despite the opposition of the stupid tsar, Paul I. When Suvorov comes to visit the tsar, he slips

on the polished floor, clearly out of his element at the elegant court. Down-to-earth portrayals of historical figures would continue during the wartime period.

Tales of Everyday Heroes Stories of "typical," heroic, ordinary people were also common. The exemplar of this approach was Pudovkin's 1926 film *Mother*. It was based on a novel by Maxim Gorky, who was promoted in the 1930s as the greatest Socialist Realist author. After Gorky's death, Mark Donskoy made three films based on the author's memoirs of his early life (*Childhood of Gorky* [1938], *Among People* [1939], and *My Universities* [1940]). The Gorky trilogy stressed the hero's lack of formal education. Coming from a deprived background, the young Gorky moves from job to job, encountering oppressive aspects of tsarist society but also occasionally finding people who resist—a kindly local chemist arrested for revolutionary activities and a crippled child who treasures the slightest pleasant moment. Near the end of *My Universities*, Gorky helps a peasant woman give birth in a field. The trilogy implies that Gorky's greatness as a writer arose from his close ties with the people (**12.10**).

Another example of this genre is *Lone White Sail* (1937, Vladimir Legoshin), which portrays the adventurous participation by children in the 1905 attempted revolution. (The film is set in Odessa and contains references to *Potemkin*.) It is also an excellent example of Shumyatsky's attempts to make Hollywood films, being shot in a polished continuity style that blended well with Socialist Realism (**12.11**).

Eisenstein's aborted project, *Bezhin Meadow*, would have been the story of a boy who places loyalty to his collective farm above his relationship with his abusive father. Unfortunately, the negative of *Bezhin Meadow* was apparently destroyed in a bombardment during World War II, and all that survives today is a reconstruction made by printing frames from each shot as still photographs. Even this slight record of the film indicates that it would have been one of the era's masterpieces. Eisenstein experimented with an extreme depth of field that looked forward to the films of Gregg Toland and Orson Welles (**12.12**) (see Cinematography Styles p. 195).

Socialist Musicals Some of the era's most popular films were musical comedies. Grigori Alexandrov, who had been Eisenstein's assistant, became the master of musicals with *Jolly Fellows* (aka *Jazz Comedy*, 1934). It concerns a cheerful singing farmer who is mistaken for a famous jazz conductor. When a party is held in his honor, his flute lures his animals into the house, and they create havoc (**12.13**). There was criticism of the film's frivolity, but Alexandrov had the ultimate protection: Stalin loved it. Alexandrov's *Volga-Volga* (1938), the story of a woman mail carrier who writes a wildly popular song, became Stalin's favorite movie.

Suvorov

12.9 In *Suvorov*, the hero is framed against the sky, towering over his victorious troops.

My Universities

12.10 In *My Universities*, the young Gorky walks along the shore, triumphantly holding up a newborn baby. Despite the hardships that he has undergone, the ending implies that this child will grow up in the freedom created by the revolution.

Lone White Sail

12.11 Shimmering cinematography and a diagonal composition in *Lone White Sail*, as middle-class passengers try to capture a fugitive sailor from the rebellious Potemkin battleship.

Bezhin Meadow

12.12 This scene of the death of the hero in *Bezhin Meadow* uses a wide-angle lens to achieve an arresting deep-focus composition.

Jolly Fellows

12.13 *Jolly Fellows* blends slapstick humor and American jazz.

The other important director in this genre was Ivan Pyriev, who specialized in *tractor musicals*, which glorified life on collective farms. Both *The Rich Bride* (1938) and *Tractor Drivers* (1939) show cheerful competitions among peasants to exceed work quotas. In 1935, miner Alexei Stakhanov had purportedly set a record for cutting coal, and the government promoted similar accomplishments by workers in all areas. "Stakhanovite" record-breakers were glorified in the press, got special privileges, and even received fan mail.

In *The Rich Bride*, a collector's accountant conspires to marry the best female tractor driver in order to share her privileges. He breaks up her romance with the best male driver by falsifying her lover's work record, but the deception is discovered, and the couple is reunited. The notion that Stakhanovite men and women should marry reappears in *Tractor Drivers*. Marianne is so famous for exceeding her plowing quotas that suitors constantly pester her. She pretends to be engaged to Nazar, one of the farm's less productive tractor drivers. The farm's supervisor is appalled at this mismatch and asks Klim, another Stakhanovite, to teach Nazar how to work better. Klim agrees, though he secretly loves Marianne himself. She discovers Klim's love for her, and the two best workers marry. Throughout the film, the tone is energetic. Although most peasants on real collective farms spent as much time as possible tilling their private gardens, in *Tractor Drivers* the characters work cheerfully in the fields while performing songs (**12.14**).

Tractor Drivers was made during a period of nervousness about the threat of Nazi Germany. Klim, an ex-soldier, undertakes to give the other drivers military training, and the farm supervisor declares, "A tractor is a tank!" Two years after the film's release, the war began.

Tractor Drivers

12.14 The collective farm's mail carrier sings animatedly about the joys of doing his job well as he rides through the broad fields of the Ukraine in *Tractor Drivers*.

The Soviet Cinema in Wartime

Uneasy Relations with Germany Before World War II, the United States, England, and other countries avoided making anti-Nazi films because they still exported films to Germany. The USSR was under no such constraints and made several films attacking the Nazis during the late 1930s. *Professor Mamlock* (1938, Adolf Minkin and Herbert Rappoport), for example, was set in Germany shortly after the Nazi government came to power. It concerns a great Jewish doctor who tries to stay out of politics and disowns his son when the youth joins a Communist group. When the doctor is forced out of his job, he denounces the Nazis and is shot. The Communists vow to fight on.

Although the Communists and Nazis were at opposite ends of the political spectrum, on August 23, 1939, a startled world learned that the USSR and Germany were signing a nonaggression pact. Having received no assurances of support from Britain and France, Stalin decided to avoid invasion by negotiating with the Germans. As part of the agreement, Hitler allowed the USSR to seize the Baltic republics and to invade Finland. During the nearly two years that the pact was respected, anti-German films of the 1930s, including *Alexander Nevsky* and *Professor Mamlock*, were withdrawn from circulation.

The first fiction film to deal with the Finnish invasion was *Front-Line Girl Friends* (1941, released abroad as *The Girl from Leningrad*). It focuses on a unit of Red Army nurses. As in many American war films, the central group is made up of such character types as a frivolous party girl who fears the sight of blood and an underage volunteer who insists on being allowed to go to the front (**12.15**). With its spectacular battle scenes and depiction of the nurses' courage, the film was a huge hit in the USSR and was popular abroad as well.

Disruptions of the Early War Period Despite the nonaggression pact, Germany abruptly invaded the USSR on June 22, 1941. By early the next year, it occupied most Soviet territory west of Moscow. During the war, German

Front-Line Girl Friends

12.15 Nurses volunteering for duty in *Front-Line Girl Friends*. The towering white statue of Stalin is typical of the many images of party heroes that appear in Soviet films of this era.

Fighting Film Album 8

12.16 The triumphant end of "Three in a Tank," as a dead German soldier falls into the foreground and victorious Soviet troops rush over him (*Fighting Film Album 8*).

The Rainbow

12.17 The heroic partisan in *The Rainbow* refuses to speak, even when the Nazis kill her baby. Carrying its body, she is shot.

soldiers pillaged much of this area, committing numerous atrocities. They bombarded Moscow heavily but failed to capture it. Most filmmaking activities were moved to studios in the unoccupied republics. Mosfilm and Lenfilm, for example, withdrew to Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan. Such an enormous effort caused considerable confusion, and the small studios had to be expanded in order to accommodate the increase in activity. Women workers had to be trained to replace male filmmakers who were in the military.

These problems interrupted feature filmmaking. Early wartime releases included shorts, newsreels, and features made before the invasion. Newsreel production was centered in the vacated Mosfilm studios. The need for quickly produced films about the war was also met in part by a series of "Fighting Film Albums." These were cheaply made compilations of short segments, combining reports, documentary sketches, satirical scenes, musical numbers, or fictional episodes. Pudovkin made "Feast at Zhirmunka" for *Fighting Film Album 6* (1941). It shows Nazis committing atrocities against women and children in an occupied village where the men have gone off to be guerrilla fighters. One woman lays out a feast for the soldiers and is forced to eat some of it first when they suspect the food has been poisoned. Reassured, they eat and drink, realizing too late that the woman has willingly poisoned herself in order to kill them. *Fighting Film Album 6* also contained a group of war songs and a documentary on women in the Soviet air force.

N. Sadkovich directed a brief fiction segment, "Three in a Tank," for *Fighting Film Album 8* (1942). In it, two Soviet soldiers and their German hostage face being burned alive inside a tank. The German is terrified, but the two Soviet men calmly plan to use dynamite to blow up themselves and the Germans surrounding the tank. Soviet troops arrive in the nick of time (**12.16**).

Although some segments of the "Fighting Film Albums" were effective, they were made far from the actual fighting and the occupied areas. Hence they often were naïve and unrealistic. Eisenstein commented that they were "more passionate than well planned."[5]

Films of the War Era Fiction features about the war began appearing in 1942. In order to stress the hatefulness of the German enemy, these often focused on women and children as victims of battles or atrocities. Based on a true incident, *Zoya* (1944, Leo Arnstam) concerns a young guerrilla captured, tortured, and hanged by the Nazis. Most of the film consists of flashbacks to her school days, when an old librarian told her of Nazi book burnings. Victor Eisimont's *Once There Was a Girl* (1945) uses a small girl's viewpoint to give a poignant portrayal of the hardships suffered by the citizens during the long siege of Leningrad.

Mark Donskoy's *The Rainbow* (1944) is set in a Ukrainian village paralyzed by both a heavy snow cover and the occupying German troops. The Nazis continue to commit atrocities among the villagers and to hang captured Soviet partisans. The occupation has drifted into routine, but the Ukrainian villagers and partisans quietly resist their oppressors (**12.17**). Finally, Soviet troops, camouflaged in white, swoop down on the village and liberate it as a rainbow appears in the sky. Despite its broad character types, *The Rainbow* was considered an unusually realistic war film, and it influenced some filmmakers of the Italian Neorealist movement (see Chapter 16).

Biographical films continued to be an important genre. Petrov followed *Peter the Great* with *Kutuzov* (1944), depicting the famous general's defense of Moscow against Napoléon in 1812. Shortly after this film was made, Petrov described the contemporary relevance of Socialist Realist biographical films:

> I am not inclined to view *Peter the Great* from a single historical perspective. I think that in some ways it is a contemporary film. The life and activities of the great Reformer of Russia seem to me very close to the life and actions of the Soviet people, who have also from day to day established the basis for a new life. It is the same for *Kutuzov*. The film was made and shown during the war. After the conquest of each village rooted out the enemy, after each new victory, the spectator saw those events as an echo of the old ones.[6]

Because Stalin was the supreme military leader of the USSR during World War II, he could be seen as a parallel both to the progressive tsars and the triumphant generals. Stalin identified in particular with Ivan the Terrible, and during the war Eisenstein worked on a three-part film on that subject. Two parts were completed. They are elaborate, full of exaggerated acting, labyrinthine sets, and richly embroidered costumes (**12.18**). Prokofiev wrote a musical track that emphasizes the heroic nature of the plot's events. The first film (released in late 1944) creates a grandiose image of Ivan, conquering invaders and resisting efforts by the nobility to undercut his unification of Russia (**Video 12.1**). It received the Stalin Prize in early 1946.

The second part of *Ivan the Terrible* fared badly. Eisenstein emphasized Ivan's doubts about his ruthless eradication of the nobility in Russia. Stalin and his officials deplored this depiction of Ivan as hesitating in his "progressive" actions, and the second part of the film was suppressed in 1946 and not released until 1958. Eisenstein, suffering from heart disease, concentrated on writing film theory until his death in 1948.

Ivan the Terrible, part 1

12.18 Eisenstein used lighting to create a looming image of the tsar in *Ivan the Terrible*, part 1.

From 1943 to 1944, Soviet troops pushed westward, regaining territory and occupying Eastern Europe. In early 1945, the Red Army advanced on Berlin, and the German government surrendered on May 8. The war had brought enormous losses to the USSR. The film industry was faced with reestablishing production in the regular studios and rebuilding the Lenfilm facilities, virtually ruined during the Siege of Leningrad. Nevertheless, as one of the victorious powers, the Soviet government retained control of its nationalized film industry. Such would not be the case for Nazi Germany.

THE GERMAN CINEMA UNDER THE NAZIS

Although Germany emerged from World War I with a relatively liberal government, the political climate moved rightward during the 1920s. In 1933, the Fascistic Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei ("National Socialist German Workers' Party," known as the Nazis) gained parliamentary control, and Adolf Hitler became chancellor. The Nazis became the only legal political party, and Hitler ruled as a dictator.

Nazi ideology was based on extreme nationalism: a belief that Germany was naturally superior to the rest of the world. This notion stemmed from a view that Germans belonged to a pure Aryan race and that other ethnic groups, especially Jews, were inferior and dangerous. Nazis also held that women were innately subordinate to men and that citizens owed unquestioning obedience to government leaders. Thus, the new German regime opposed not only the Communist ideology of the USSR but also the democratic principles of many other nations.

Hitler led his party to power in part by appealing to feelings of humiliation stemming from Germany's defeat in World War I. The country had been forced to disarm its military. Soldiers were not permitted to carry rifles. By playing on old prejudices, the Nazis managed to convince many people that the defeat had been caused by Jews. Similarly, the economic problems caused by the Depression were blamed on Jews and Communists. Hitler promised to restore both the economy and national pride.

The Nazi Regime and the Film Industry

Like Stalin, Hitler was a movie fan; he cultivated friendships with actors and filmmakers and often screened films

as after-dinner entertainment. Even more fascinated with the cinema was his powerful minister of propaganda, Dr. Josef Goebbels, who controlled the arts in the Nazi regime. Goebbels watched films every day and socialized with filmmakers. In 1934, he gained control of censorship, and until the end of the war he personally examined every feature film, short, and newsreel that was released. Despite his hatred of Communism, Goebbels admired Eisenstein's *Potemkin* for its powerful propaganda, and he hoped to create an equally stirring cinema expressing Nazi ideas.

Goebbels moved to control other aspects of the film industry. The Nazi Party's virulently anti-Semitic attitudes led it to remove all Jews from the film industry. Jews were forbidden to work for any film establishment—even in foreign companies' distribution offices. This move precipitated an exodus of filmmaking talent. Many Jews fled, including Max Ophüls, Billy Wilder, and Robert Siodmak.

Anyone holding leftist or liberal views was also in danger, and many non-Jews who could not stomach Nazi policies departed. Leftist playwright Bertolt Brecht, who scripted *Kuhle Wampe* (see 14.4), fled to Denmark. Fritz Lang went into exile, first in France and then in the United States. Actor Conrad Veidt, though of "Aryan" origin, reportedly wrote "Jew" on the racial form required of each film worker and left the country. Ironically, in Hollywood he went on to play Nazi villains (most famously, Major Strasser in *Casablanca*).

In April 1935, the Nazis' anti-Semitic campaign expanded with a ban on screenings of all pre-1933 films produced with the involvement of Jews. This move coincided with increasingly harsh measures being enacted by the government; the "Nuremberg laws" in September, among other things, stripped Jews of their citizenship and forbade marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Goebbels later ordered the production of anti-Semitic films.

Goebbels's main effort to control the German cinema came through gradual nationalization of the film industry. When the Nazis came to power, there was no pressing need for the government to interfere. Most shares in the largest company, Ufa, belonged to the powerful right-wing media mogul Alfred Hugenberg (who was briefly minister of economics in the new regime). Although many Ufa officials opposed the Nazis, the company made some of the earliest Fascist films. Moreover, in June 1933, the government set up the *Filmkreditbank*. The "Film Credit Bank" supported production in the wake of the Depression, but it also allowed the Nazis to oversee filmmaking because projects had to meet ideological requirements in order to receive loans.

Nationalization was not tried immediately for another reason: Goebbels did not want to alienate other countries. The industry had to export its films. It also needed imports, primarily from the United States and France, to satisfy theaters' needs. Some nations, however, resisted dealing with Nazi Germany. Both imports and exports fell sharply during the mid-1930s. At the same time, production costs were ballooning. The government had two options: to subsidize production (as Fascist Italy did) or to nationalize the industry.

The Nazis chose nationalization because it offered them greater control over the films. The process of nationalization, however, proceeded differently from that in the USSR. Instead of openly seizing private firms, as the Soviet government had done, during 1937 and 1938 the Nazi regime secretly bought controlling interests in the three main film-producing companies (Ufa, Tobis, and Bavaria) and two important smaller firms (Terra and Froelich). By 1939, eighteen independent production firms still existed, but they made fewer than one-third of that year's features.

The nationalization of the film industry was completed in 1942. All German film companies were assembled under a giant holding firm, called Ufa-Film (but abbreviated as Ufi, to distinguish it from the old Ufa). Ufi was vertically integrated, controlling 138 firms in all sectors of the industry. By now, Hitler had seized Austria and Czechoslovakia, and Ufi absorbed their national film industries.

Despite this consolidation, the number of films produced in Germany did not meet the demand, and production declined after the war began in 1939. The Nazis were more successful in controlling the types of films made.

Films of the Nazi Era

Because of the repellent nature of Nazi ideology, modern audiences outside Germany have seen few films from this era. The exceptions tend to be the more heavily propagandistic films such as *Triumph of the Will* and *Jud Süss*, which are studied primarily as historical documents. Nevertheless, most films made during the period were intended as entertainment and have little or no overt political content. Of the 1,097 features made from 1933 to 1945, only about one-sixth were banned by postwar Allied censors for containing Nazi propaganda. Because all films had to receive Goebbels's approval, they certainly could not attack Nazi ideology. Many are, however, ordinary studio films not very different from those made in Hollywood or England during the same period. (Indeed, many are available on German television and video today, as old Hollywood films are in the United States.)

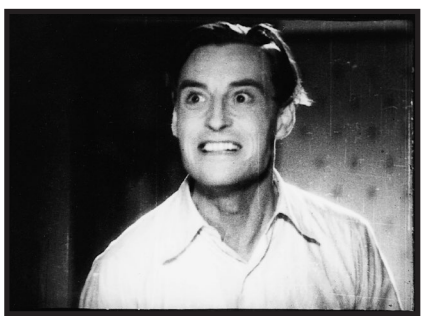
Pro-Nazi Propaganda Some of the earliest strongly propagandistic films appeared in 1933: *SA-Mann Brand* ("SA-Man Brand" or "Storm Trooper Brand," Franz Seitz), *Hans Westmar* (Franz Wenzler), and *Hitlerjunge Quex* ("The Quicksilver Hitler Youth," Hans Steinhoff). These were intended to win adherents to the party by glorifying Nazi heroes. The films take place shortly before the Nazis seized power, and they depict the era as a struggle between vicious Communists and stalwart young Hitler supporters.

Hans Westmar (1933) is based loosely on the life of Horst Wessel, one of the first to die for the Nazi cause and author of the party's fighting song. The film portrays late-1920s Berlin as sinking under Jewish, Communist, and decadent foreign influences. Young Westmar disgustedly visits a café that serves only English beer and features a black jazz band. A Jewish play is on at the Piscator-Bühne (a real leftist theater of the day), and a cinema is showing Boris Barnet's 1927 Soviet comedy *The Girl with the Hat Box*. Villainous Communists plot to take over Germany by exploiting working-class poverty. Westmar proves so adept at winning converts to the Nazi cause that the Communists assassinate him (**12.19**).

Hitlerjunge Quex was, like many Nazi films, designed to appeal to adolescents. The protagonist, Heini, is attracted to a Hitler Youth group, despite his drunken Communist father's opposition (**12.20**). The most effective scene shows him visiting a Communist youth camp where the leaders press wine and beer on the young visitors; he then wanders off and encounters a Hitler Youth camp where the children participate in healthy sport. After Heini joins the Hitler Youth, his valiant service leads the Communists to murder him. Although the Communist organizations in both *Hans Westmar* and *Hitlerjunge Quex* contain stereotyped Jewish members, anti-Semitism is a minor part of these propaganda films, which mainly attack the German Communist party.

The Reich's Documentarist: Leni Riefenstahl For modern audiences, the most famous filmmaker of the Nazi era is Leni Riefenstahl. She had started as an actress in the silent era and had directed herself in one sound feature, *The Blue Light* (1932), starring as a mountain sprite. Her two propaganda features, *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Olympia* (1938), were made at Hitler's request.

Triumph of the Will is a documentary feature made at the Nazi party congress in Nuremberg in 1934. Hitler intended the event to demonstrate his control of a powerful, unified group of followers. Hitler put enormous resources at Riefenstahl's disposal. She oversaw sixteen camera crews, and the huge buildings erected for the event were designed to look spectacular in the film (**12.21**, **12.22**; **Video 12.2**). Using skillful cinematography, editing, and music, Riefenstahl created an impressive two-hour pageant of Nazi ideology and fervor. She also displayed to a nervous world Germany's military strength (**12.23**).

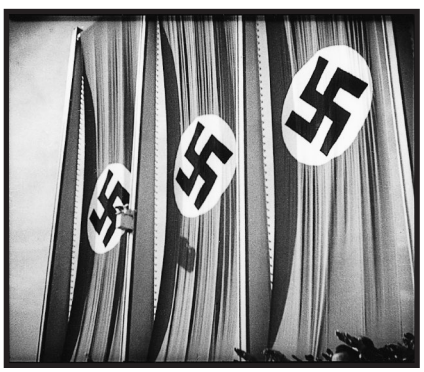


Hans Westmar

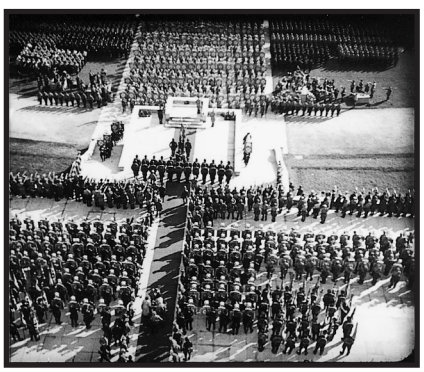
12.19 The hero's zeal for the Nazi cause in *Hans Westmar* sometimes verges on fanaticism. Later propaganda films toned down such extreme behavior.

Hitlerjunge Quex

12.20 The young hero of *Hitlerjunge Quex* expresses delight as he receives his Hitler Youth uniform.



12.21, 12.22 Facilities for filming *Triumph of the Will* included a camera elevator, visible in **12.21** on the supports of the banners in the giant open-air auditorium. It permitted moving shots of the vast crowds, carefully arranged for the camera, as seen in **12.22**.



Triumph of the Will

Triumph of the Will

12.23 Since 1919, German soldiers had been forbidden to bear arms. In *Triumph of the Will* they parade carrying shovels in place of rifles—but the threat posed by Hitler's troops is still clear.

Olympia

12.24 Riefenstahl juxtaposes a series of shots of bodies soaring against the sky in the diving sequence in the second part of *Olympia*.

Jud Süss

12.25 Fears of Jewish corruption are exploited in *Jud Süss* when Süss rapes the heroine. She is played by Kristina Söderbaum, who portrayed idealized blonde Aryan heroines in several of Veit Harlan's films.

Made as a record of the 1936 Olympic Games, held in Berlin, *Olympia* contains far less overt Nazi propaganda than *Triumph of the Will*. Nevertheless, it was financed by the government, again on a vast scale. The intention was to show Germany as a cooperative member of the world community and thus quell fears about Nazi aggression. It was also hoped that "Aryan" participants would win prizes, demonstrating the racial inferiority of their competitors.

Riefenstahl deployed camera crews to film the events and to catch crowd reactions. The resulting footage required two years to edit, and the final film was released in two feature-length parts. There were glimpses of Hitler and other Nazi officials viewing the games, but Riefenstahl concentrated on creating a sense of friendly competition among the athletes and on the beauty and suspense of the events. At times that sense of beauty became almost abstract, as in the famous diving sequence (**12.24**). The medals won by several non "Aryan" athletes, most prominently the Black American track star Jesse Owens, also helped undercut the original propaganda purposes of the film.

Attacking the "Enemies" of the Reich Nazi Germany became more aggressive in 1938, seizing Czechoslovakia and Austria, and launched World War II in Europe by invading Poland in 1939. Films attacking the Reich's outside enemies became more frequent. Some were anti-British because Great Britain epitomized the kind of parliamentary democracy that the Nazis opposed. In *Carl Peters* (1941, Herbert Selpin), British secret agents use underhanded means to battle the hero in colonizing parts of Africa. The USSR continued to be a favorite target because the Nazis aimed to enslave and exterminate Slavic populations. *GPU* (1942, Karl Ritter) associates Soviet Communism with women's equality, peace, and disarmament; the GPU (Soviet secret police) acts as a band of assassins furthering the USSR's plans for world domination. (In fact, the GPU had been used primarily to persecute Soviet citizens.) After the German defeat at Stalingrad in 1943, one of the turning points of the war, the Nazis were not anxious to call attention to the USSR, and anti-Soviet features disappeared.

The most notorious of the *enemies films* were five anti-Semitic features. These were ordered by Goebbels in 1939, shortly after Hitler first publicly discussed total annihilation as the "final solution" to the "Jewish problem." Among the most insidious of them was *Jud Süss* ("Jew Süss," 1940, Veit Harlan). A historical epic set in the eighteenth century, *Jud Süss* was based on the stereotype of the grasping Jewish moneylender. Süss loans money to an impoverished duke and tries to turn the duchy into a Jewish state. He commits hideous crimes, including raping the heroine and torturing her lover (**12.25**). *Jud Süss*, the one commercially successful anti-Semitic film, was widely seen and incited violence against Jews.

Der ewige Jude ("The Eternal Jew," 1940, Fritz Hippler) was a documentary exploiting similar myths, depicting Jews as a homeless race, spreading corruption by wandering through Christian lands. Footage of poverty-stricken inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto is accompanied by a narrator's voice saying that Jews spread disease. A scene from United Artists' 1934 film, *House of Rothschild*, a positive depiction of the Jewish banking family, is taken out of context to "prove" a supposed Jewish conspiracy to control international finance. *Der ewige Jude* was so viciously anti-Semitic that it proved unpopular. After 1940, hatred of Jews appeared only in isolated scenes, not as the basis for entire films—partly because the Nazis wanted to

divert attention from the exterminations then occurring in the death camps.

Glorifying War Propaganda also drummed up enthusiasm for the war effort. Some militarist films showed life in uniform to be full of comradely cheer. In *Drei Unteroffiziere* ("Three Petty Officers," 1939, Werner Hochbaum), the heroes find romance while on leave, sing as they march along, and occasionally participate in sanitized battles. The Nazis also, however, promoted a fanatical belief in "blood and soil," glorifying death for the fatherland. Goebbels's pet project of the war period, *Kolberg* (1945, Veit Harlan), fostered this notion. In 1943, *Kolberg* was envisioned as a vast historical epic, the German *Gone with the Wind*. Growing shortages caused by the war delayed the film's completion until 1945. So obsessed was Goebbels with his project that he drew nearly 200,000 troops away from the fighting to act as extras. The result was an extravagant film, shot on the new Agfacolor film stock introduced early in the war.

Kolberg dramatizes an incident in the Napoleonic Wars, as the citizens of a small Prussian town take up arms to defend themselves when the local military authorities want to surrender. The people are eventually defeated, but the film highlights their courageous resistance to the French. Apparently Goebbels hoped that ordinary citizens would rise up and save Germany from its impending defeat. That did not happen. By the time *Kolberg* premiered on January 30, 1945, Allied bombing had closed most Berlin cinemas. The film remained virtually unseen as the city fell to Soviet troops.

Popular Entertainment Goebbels believed that the cinema was valuable as pure entertainment, and he did not demand Nazi ideology in every film. The tradition of German musicals that had begun in the early sound era continued during the Third Reich. The biggest hit of 1935, for example, was *Amphitryon* (Reinhold Schünzel), a comedy set in large, abstract white sets representing ancient Rome, with anachronistic touches such as Mercury delivering his messages on roller skates. Danish director Detlef Sierck (known after World War II in the United States as Douglas Sirk) made several films in Germany in the late 1930s, including the popular musical melodrama *Zu neuen Ufern* ("Toward New Shores," 1937). It is the story of a famous English music-hall singer who, taking the blame for a check her lover has forged, is sent to prison in Australia (**12.26**).

One of the most unusual films of the Nazi era was *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien* ("The Emperor of California," 1936, Luis Trenker). It starred Trenker in the story of Johann August Sutter, who accidentally discovered gold in California and set off the gold rush of 1849 (**12.27**). Much of the film was shot on location in the United States, and it suggested none of the hostilities that were to lead to war between America and Germany several years later.

The prolific Veit Harlan directed a number of nonpropaganda films, such as *Jugend* ("Youth," 1938), made by Tobis shortly after it was taken over by the government. *Jugend* involves an illegitimate young woman whom a Protestant pastor drives to feelings of guilt over her love affair with a young man. The film's style and even its strict morality are not much different from what one would expect in a contemporary Hollywood film (**12.28**).

Zu neuen Ufern

12.26 The heroine of *Zu neuen Ufern* at the height of her success, before her unjust conviction sends her to prison in Australia.

Der Kaiser von Kalifornien

12.27 Rugged Luis Trenker, star and director of *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien*, embodied the ideal hero in many popular adventure films of the Nazi era.

Jugend

12.28 The large, brightly lit sets in *Jugend* resemble those used in big Hollywood studio productions of the same era.

One director working during this period was Helmut Käutner, who would become more prominent in the postwar era. In *Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska* ("Till We Meet Again, Franziska," 1941), he employs Ophülsian camera movement to portray romance, though with greater realism and a more subdued tone than Ophüls displayed. A traveling reporter has an affair with and later marries Franziska, a sensitive young woman. Despite their genuine love, Franziska grows withdrawn and morose as a result of his lengthy absences, which each begin with his saying, "Auf wiedersehen, Franziska," as he departs on a train. This bittersweet psychological study is marred by an ending aimed at satisfying the Nazi authorities. The husband returns after Germany's invasion of Poland and goes into the military, with Franziska, implausibly recovered from her malaise, seeing him off at the train with an optimistic "Wiedersehen, Michael." Still, such films indicate that there is more variety to Nazi-period cinema than is sometimes believed.

The Aftermath of the Nazi Cinema

After the Allies captured Germany, they faced the problem of what to do with the people who had participated in the making of Nazi films. Goebbels was beyond punishment, having committed suicide during the fall of Berlin. Some filmmakers fled the country. Karl Ritter, director of *GPU* and one of the Nazi era's most popular directors, went into exile in Argentina. Others tried to maintain a low profile. Riefenstahl returned to her home in Austria, but her notoriety ensured that she would be investigated. Her interrogators concluded that she could not be charged with any crime, but she was not permitted to work on films again until 1952, when she completed her long-planned *Tiefland*. Many other filmmakers were also blacklisted while their Nazi-period activities were probed.

Veit Harlan was the only filmmaker charged and tried. There was considerable evidence that *Jud Süss* had been used to incite SS troops to arrest Jews and had been shown to audiences to weaken opposition to sending Jews to death camps. Harlan, however, claimed that he and the other filmmakers involved had been forced to make the film and had not intended it as propaganda. Two trials failed to produce enough evidence to convict him.

It is virtually impossible to assess how willingly such filmmakers cooperated with the Nazi regime. Some of them undoubtedly distorted the truth to protect themselves. Riefenstahl, for example, claimed that *Triumph of the Will* simply documented an unstaged event and that she financed *Olympia* herself, though ample evidence contradicts her claims.

ITALY: PROPAGANDA VERSUS ENTERTAINMENT

"Why," complained an Italian writer in 1930, "has there been no birth of a cinema inspired by the great Fascist revolution to stand beside that inspired by the Communist revolution?"[7] The question seemed reasonable because Benito Mussolini ascended to power in 1922, only five years after the Bolshevik Revolution. Yet during the 1920s, Italian Fascists made few attempts to commandeer the media. The agency LUCE (L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa), which controlled documentary and newsreel films, was the government's only major effort to centralize propaganda.

There were several reasons for this relaxed policy. Italian Fascist ideology, based almost completely on nationalism, was vaguer than Communism or Naziism. Mussolini's regime was also less stable, relying on a loose coalition of provincial landowners, disaffected intellectuals, superpatriots, and a passive middle class. Although the Fascist government sought to regiment public life, it tended to leave private interests alone. It assisted industries, but it did not nationalize them. Italy thus offers a third example of how cinema fared under authoritarian rule in the 1930s and 1940s.

Industry Tendencies

At the end of the 1920s, the entrepreneur Stefano Pittaluga sought to revive Italy's film industry by creating a vertically integrated company. Pittaluga took over several small production companies, distribution firms, and theater chains. He bought the old Cines studio and reopened it with great fanfare in 1930. For a few years, the new Cines firm dominated Italian production, chiefly because it had the only sound-recording facilities. Still, Cines could not heal the ailing industry. Exhibition prospered, but foreign films, chiefly American, ruled. The coming of sound accelerated the decline in production. In 1930, only twelve Italian features were made; in 1931, only thirteen.

As the Depression hit the Italian economy, the government began to aid several industries. A series of laws from 1931 to 1933 set up measures to protect the cinema. The government guaranteed subsidies according to box-office receipts; theaters were obliged to program a certain number of Italian films; foreign films were taxed; and a fund was established to award prizes to high-quality films. In 1932, Mussolini's regime also established the Venice Film Festival as an international showcase for the Italian product.

Such efforts encouraged producers to enter the market. After 1932, as Cines's power faded, Lux, Manenti, Titanus, ERA, and other production companies formed.

By the late 1930s, national production had risen to around forty-five features per year.

On the whole, however, the legislation did not improve conditions. Most films were commercially unsuccessful. Soon the government acknowledged that the film industry was an important ideological force that should not deteriorate. In 1934, the undersecretariat of state for press and propaganda established the Direzione Generale della Cinematografia ("General Direction of Cinema") to be headed by Luigi Freddi.

Although Freddi had supervised the Fascist party's propaganda office, he brought to his new position a surprisingly laissez-faire attitude toward government intervention. He suggested that the state should encourage and reward the industry but not dictate to it. Convinced that Italian audiences would reject heavily propagandistic films, he supported producers' desire for a "cinema of distraction" along Hollywood lines. A trip to Berlin confirmed Freddi's convictions. The Nazis had damaged German cinema, he claimed, by "blind and authoritarian coercion."[8] An entertained public, Freddi believed, was a passive public.

Freddi's views led the government to a series of new policies. In 1935, it established the Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche ("National Office for the Cinema Industry," or ENIC), which was given authority to intervene in all domains of film. ENIC took over Pittaluga's company, producing some films and coproducing others. It also absorbed some theater chains and began distributing films.

After Cines's studio burned in 1935, Freddi oversaw the building of a modern government-owned studio complex, Cinecittà ("Cinema-city"), on the outskirts of Rome. The facility soon housed twelve sound stages. From Cinecittà's opening in 1937 to 1943, more than half of all Italian films were shot there. Also, in 1935, Freddi established a film school, the Centro Sperimentale ("Experimental Center"). Two years later, the Centro launched its journal, *Bianco e nero* ("White and Black"), which made important contributions to film theory and has continued to this day. The Centro turned out many of the major Italian directors, performers, and technicians.

The government's investment in film culture yielded international prestige. The Venice Biennale arts festival, as well as the Venice Film Festival, promoted Italy as a cosmopolitan society. Foreign directors such as Max Ophüls, Gustav Machaty, Jean Epstein, and Abel Gance visited the country to make films.

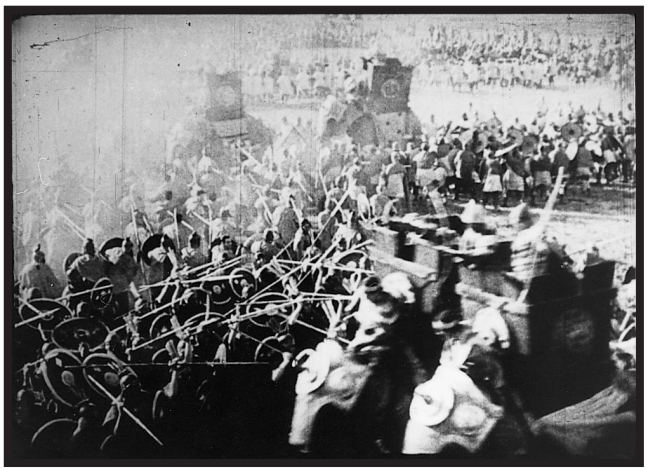
Strong legislation also came forward. One law guaranteed government backing for most large-budget films, which encouraged banks to invest in production. The "Alfieri law" of 1938 gave producers direct aid based on a percentage of ticket sales, thus favoring popular films and high-output firms. Just as dramatic was the "Monopoly law" of the same year, which gave ENIC control over all imported films and led four of the major Hollywood firms to withdraw their product from Italy. As a result, 1941 production nearly doubled to an unprecedented eighty-three features.

The Italian cinema never became a state-based political cinema like that of the USSR or Germany. ENIC controlled only a small fraction of the market and made only a few films. Mussolini, like Stalin, previewed virtually every feature made in his country, but he almost never banned a film. At the same time, despite government assistance, the Italian industry did not become self-supporting. Throughout the 1930s, the average Italian production lost money. The regime subsidized a fragile business while leaving it largely in private hands.

A Cinema of Distraction

The comparative autonomy of the industry did not make the Italian cinema free of propaganda. LUCE's documentaries and newsreels extolled Mussolini's regime, and some explicitly Fascist features were made. The tenth anniversary of the party's founding led to two commemorative films, *Camicia nera* ("Black Shirt," 1932) and *Vecchia Guardia* ("The Old Guard," 1933), somewhat similar in thrust to Germany's *Hans Westmar*. In the mid-1930s, Italy's control over Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, and smaller areas created an African empire. Films glorifying Fascist authority included the spectacle *Lo squadrone bianco* ("The White Squadron," 1936), one of the few to be shot largely in Libya (**Video 12.3**). Fascist policies were more indirectly glorified in patriotic historical spectacles such as *1860* (1934) and *Scipione l' Africano* (1937).

Although most Fascist intellectuals hated Communism, many shared Goebbels's admiration for Soviet films. They hoped that Italian films could move toward a nationalistic, propagandistic cinema. These "Fascists of the left" particularly welcomed epic spectacle. The masses, they hoped, would burst with pride at the sight of tumultuous battles in Spain, of Rome's elephants charging into heathen hordes, and of camels crossing Ethiopia (**12.29**, **12.30**). The regime, however, often disapproved of the spectacles' portrayal of the party. In addition, many of the films were financial disappointments. Not until World War II did a strongly propagandistic streak emerge in Italian cinema. Before then, a cinema of distraction was the norm.


Scipione l'Africano

Lo Squadrone Bianco

12.29, 12.30 Fascist spectacle in *Scipione l'Africano* and *Lo Squadrone bianco*.

La Signora di tutti

12.31 At the star's death, her publicity machine halts, in *La Signora di tutti*.

Il Signor Max

12.32 De Sica as Signor Max, emphasized by Hollywood-style edge lighting (*Il Signor Max*).

Campo de' fiori

12.33 Fish peddler Aldo Fabrizi encounters Anna Magnani in *Campo de' fiori*.

Two popular genres flourished. Italian studios turned out romantic melodramas, typically set among the rich. A prototype was Gennaro Righelli's *La Canzone dell'amore* ("The Song of Love," 1930), with later examples being Mario Camerini's *T'amero sempre* ("I Will Love You Always," 1933) and Goffredo Alessandrini's *Noi vivi* (*We the Living*, 1942). An outstanding entry is Max Ophüls's *La Signora di tutti* ("Everybody's Lady," 1934), a mordant critique of the star-making machinery of the publicity industry. In flashback, the plot shows an innocent girl seduced by the father of the man she loves. When their romance sours, she becomes a film star. Eventually she commits suicide (**12.31**). Virtually every scene of *La Signora di tutti* is full of emotional turmoil, which Ophüls films with great intensity. At climactic moments his camera sweeps across the action, losing and then finding characters with a giddy abandon that recalls *Liebelei* (see The Early Sound Era in Germany p. 177).

The other major genre of the era was comedy. As in other countries, sound film quickly brought forth romantic comedies built around infectious tunes. Sound also encouraged dialect humor, and many successful comedians—Ettore Petrolini, Vittorio De Sica, and Totò—came to cinema from music halls and regional theaters. De Sica moved into mainstream romantic comedy in such Cines products as *Gli uomini, che mascalzoni* ("What Scoundrels Men Are," 1932). *Il Signor Max* ("Mr. Max," 1937), in which De Sica portrays a poor man pretending to be rich, proved him to be a top box-office attraction (**12.32**). Later, Aldo Fabrizi's Roman dialect comedy yielded him a comparable success. The postwar Neorealist movement owed a large debt to popular comedy: De Sica became a major Neorealist director, and Fabrizi's teaming with Anna Magnani in *Campo de' fiori* ("Field of Flowers," 1943; **12.33**) looked ahead to Rossellini's *Open City* (1946).

1860

12.34 A martial angle from Blasetti's epic *1860*.

The Iron Crown

12.35 Fairy-tale atmosphere for peplum musclemen: the call to battle in *The Iron Crown*.

The range of Italian production of the period is neatly exemplified by the work of Alessandro Blasetti. After the critical success of *Sole* (1929; see Italy p. 164) he made *Resurrectio* (1930), a romantic melodrama that combined the rapid cutting and elaborate camera movements of the silent "international style" with experimental sound techniques. Both *Nerone* (1930) and *La Tavola dei poveri* (1932) joined the current of dialect comedies.

Blasetti argued unfashionably that artists should creatively interpret Fascist ideology. This he sought to do in *Vecchia Guardia*, a history of the early days of the party that resembled *Hitlerjunge Quex*. Blasetti's massive *1860* not only brought regional dialects to the historical film but also borrowed from the heroic imagery of the Soviet cinema (**12.34**). Blasetti also made romantic melodramas, a historical swashbuckler, psychological dramas, and the important comedy *Four Steps in the Clouds* (1942). His fantasy pageant, *The Iron Crown* (1941), pushes the peplum formulas of the Italian silent cinema to an eccentric extreme (**12.35**), adding a hint of a pacifist message. When Goebbels saw *The Iron Crown*, he is said to have remarked: "If a Nazi director had made it, he would have been put up against a wall and shot."[9]

A New Realism?

Between 1940 and 1942, Italy's battlefield successes boosted the film business. The 1938 legislation had streamlined the industry, creating more than a dozen production-distribution combines. The adroit Luigi Freddi, who was by 1941 president of ENIC and supervisor of Cinecittà, revived Cines as a semigovernmental company. Though never as all-embracing as Ufi in Germany, Freddi's Cines produced more films than any other Italian firm during 1942 and 1943. Overall, film attendance increased and output rose to unprecedented levels: 89 features in 1941 and 119 in 1942. This surge in production allowed young directors to start careers, and many of these men would achieve fame in the postwar era.

Even in wartime conditions, however, the regime did not commandeer the industry. The General Direction, under Freddi's successor Eitel Monaco, actually liberalized censorship. More generally, during the late 1930s, anti-Fascist attitudes grew strong among younger intellectuals, who were dismayed by the regime's military adventures and doctrinaire educational system. This atmosphere fostered a broadening of artistic options.

One trend looked back to nineteenth-century theatrical traditions. This trend was called *calligraphism* for its decorative impulses and its retreat from social reality. Typical examples are Renato Castellani's *Un Colpo di pistola* ("A Pistol Shot," 1942) and *Via delle cinque lune* ("Five Moon Street," 1942), by Luigi Chiarini, the first head of Centro Sperimentale.

A younger generation, however, was debating the merits of realistic art. Influenced by Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and other American authors, writers argued for a return to an Italian tradition of regional naturalism (epitomized in the *verismo* of Giovanni Verga, a turn-of-the-century novelist). Similarly, in the pages of *Bianco e nero*, *Cinema*, and other journals, critics called for directors to film the problems of ordinary people in actual surroundings. Aspiring filmmakers were impressed by Soviet Montage films, by French Poetic Realism, and by Hollywood populist directors such as Frank Capra and King Vidor. In 1939, Michelangelo Antonioni envisioned a film about the River Po that would chronicle life along the river. A 1941 essay by Giuseppe De Santis praised American Westerns, Soviet landscape shots, Jean Renoir's 1930s films, and some works of Blasetti as forerunners of an approach that would blend fiction and documentary into "a true and genuine Italian cinema."[10]

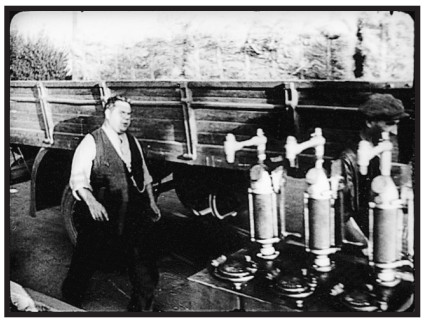
Such debates gained support from films that were released during the war years. Several of these manifest a new reliance on regional dialects, location shooting, and nonprofessional actors. In Roberto Rossellini's *La Nave Bianca* ("The White Ship," 1941), for instance, a naval war drama is filmed in semidocumentary fashion (**12.36**). Forerunners of this trend can be found, notably Walter Ruttmann's *Acciaio* (1933), Raffaelo Matarazzo's *Treno Popolare* (1933), and Amleto Palermi's *Porto* (1935), but these films of the early 1940s seemed to move sharply toward a "new realism."

La Nave bianca

12.36 In a scene reminiscent of *Potemkin*, Rossellini shows sailors at one with their machines, in *La Nave Bianca*.

The Children Are Watching Us

12.37 In *The Children Are Watching Us*, De Sica framed the troubled family against a vista of apartment windows, suggesting that other urban tragedies surround them.



Ossessione

12.38 A crane shot in *Ossessione*: as the seedy store owner pumps gas for a truck ...

Ossessione

12.39 ... the camera rises to reveal the café where his wife waits (*Ossessione*).

Ossessione

12.40 Rich chiaroscuro lighting intensifies the meeting between the drifting hero and the boss's sultry wife in *Ossessione*.

Blasetti's *Four Steps in the Clouds* (1942) centers on a traveling salesman frustrated by his boring life. On a trip to the countryside, he reluctantly pretends to be the husband of a pregnant girl whose family has cast her out. At first he is embarrassed by her family's mistreatment of him, but he comes to see the rural interlude as a break from his routine. In building a populist comedy on such topics as out-of-wedlock pregnancy and the sterility of married life, *Four Steps* gave the genre a quietly ironic melancholy.

The second breakthrough film was De Sica's fifth effort as director, *The Children Are Watching Us* (1943). If Blasetti turned the sentimental comedy somber, De Sica made melodrama border on tragedy. A woman is tempted to leave her husband and son for her lover. De Sica and his scriptwriter Cesare Zavattini complicate this familiar situation by telling the story largely from the boy's point of view. In a startling finale, after the mother drives the father to suicide, the little boy rejects her. The family is well-to-do, but *The Children Are Watching Us* avoids the elegance of the society melodramas and offers a strong social critique (**12.37**).

The boldest manifestation of the realistic trend was Luchino Visconti's *Ossessione* ("Obsession"), released in 1943. Adapted from James M. Cain's novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, the film traces how a drifter's passion for a café owner's wife leads them to murder her husband. Visconti's camerawork is as elaborate as that in any studio product (**12.38**, **12.39**), but his mise-en-scène has an unexpected grittiness. By setting the drama in the sun-drenched, impoverished Po valley, he refused the glamour of mainstream Italian production. The steamy heat soaks people's clothes; a coil of flypaper sways over the couple's dinner table. Staggering home from a tavern, the husband crawls into a ditch and vomits. Apart from broaching the forbidden subject of adultery, Visconti's version adds a homosexual theme to Cain's original.

After controversial first showings, *Ossessione* was withdrawn from distribution. Still, it remained a point of reference. A 1943 article by Umberto Barbaro called for a *neo-realismo* comparable to that seen in French films such as *Quai des brumes* (see Poetic Realism p. 252), and he suggested that *Ossessione* could point the way.

Today these films by Blasetti, De Sica, and Visconti seem close to mainstream traditions. *Four Steps* developed out of popular comedy, while the others owe a good deal to melodrama. *Ossessione* is closer to American film noir than to postwar Neorealism. All three films exploit the star system and display studio lighting techniques (**12.40**). Even their location shooting is offset by Hollywood-style studio sets and rear projections (**12.41**). At the time, however, what attracted attention was their depiction of social problems long concealed by Freddi's cinema of distraction.

Four Steps in the Clouds

12.41 The traveling salesman's bus trip, shot in a studio bus, complete with careful lighting and rear projection in *Four Steps in the Clouds*.

In 1943, the Allies invaded southern Italy, and Mussolini's government fled north to establish the Republic of Salò. Fascist loyalists and German troops occupied the northern and central regions, where they were fought by an armed resistance movement. Italian film production dropped precipitously and did not revive until 1945. Then the memories of the resistance and visions of a cinema that recorded everyday life would provide major sources for the Neorealist movement.

The Soviet, German, and Italian industries of this period exemplify three ways in which a government could control its film industry. In the USSR, nationalization had occurred early on, in an open fashion. The Nazis covertly acquired film companies and forced them to produce films supporting the regime. The Italian government used more indirect means to ensure the film industry's cooperation. After the war, the Soviet system lasted until the late 1980s. The defeat of the Nazis left the German industry in a shambles. In Italy, where the industry had not been nationalized, the transition to peacetime filmmaking went more smoothly.

REFERENCES

1. A. A. Zhdanov, "Soviet Literature—The Richest in Ideas, the Most Advanced Literature," in *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism* (1935; reprint, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), p. 21.
2. "For a Great Cinema Art: Speeches to the All-Union Creative Conference of Workers in Soviet Cinema (Extracts)," in *The Film Factory*, p. 355.
3. Boris Shumyatsky, *A Cinema for the Millions* (Extracts), tr. Richard Taylor, in Taylor and Ian Christie, eds., *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Documents 1896–1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 359.
4. Quoted in Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 353.
5. Quoted in Neya Zorkaya, *The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989), p. 175.
6. Quoted in Sagalovitch, "Vladimir Petrov: Maître du film historique," in *Les Maîtres du cinéma soviétique au travail* (Service cinématographique de l'U.R.S.S. en France, 1946), pp. 75–6.
7. Quoted in Gian Piero Brunetta, "The Conversion of the Italian Cinema to Fascism in the 1920's," *Journal of Italian history* 1 (1978): 452.
8. Quoted in David Forgacs, *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era 1880–1980* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 72.
9. Quoted in Elaine Mancini, *Struggles of the Italian Film Industry during Fascism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), pp. 170–71.
10. Giuseppe De Santis, "Towards an Italian Landscape," in David Overbey, ed., *Springtime in Italy: A Reader on Neo-Realism* (London: Talisman, 1978), p. 127.

We discuss some topics in this chapter on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*: On Socialist Realist filmmaking in the USSR: "Ninotchka's mistake: Inside Stalin's film industry"

CHAPTER 13

Le Roman de Werther

FRANCE: POETIC REALISM, THE POPULAR FRONT, AND THE OCCUPATION, 1930–1945

Les Visiteurs du soir

France felt the effects of the worldwide Depression comparatively late. Bank failures began in late 1930, and economic production declined from the second half of 1931 on. The government failed to counter these problems, and the slump lingered throughout the 1930s. The film industry was hit hard by the Depression, and its already unstable production sector became even more fragmented. Other studio systems we have examined, such as those of Britain, Japan, and Italy, were more coherent and prolific.

Still, French cinema of this era was more significant than its industrial conditions suggest. A weak studio system offered filmmakers flexibility and freedom. Filmmakers such as René Clair and Jean Renoir did their most important work during the 1930s, and French films had an influence around the world second only to that of Hollywood films.

Throughout Europe, economic problems created political turmoil. Italy, Germany, Spain, and smaller countries were establishing Fascist governments. Right-wing parties were pushing France in the same direction, and during the mid-1930s a coalition of leftist groups, the Popular Front, opposed them and briefly came to power. This movement had a short-lived but significant impact on filmmaking.

France's involvement in World War II, beginning in September 1939, cut off most filmmaking activity. When German forces captured Paris in June 1940, a right-wing French government was established in Vichy, in the south. The German Occupation lasted until August 1944. During these four years, the conditions of film production and exhibition changed radically, and many filmmakers had to flee or go into hiding. Those who remained, however, managed to keep the French industry alive. Some of the resulting films are distinctive for their tone of fantasy, isolation, and escapism. Although World War II altered many countries' films, there can be few places

where the break between the prewar 1930s and the early wartime 1940s was as dramatic as in France.

THE INDUSTRY AND FILMMAKING DURING THE 1930s

France's film production had declined precipitously from its glory days before World War I, when it dominated world screens. The coming of sound in 1929 gave it a boost because audiences were eager to hear dialogue spoken in French, and prosperity early in the decade slightly bolstered production. Through the 1930s, the industry produced an average of 110 features per year. Of the European countries, only Germany, with a much larger population produced more.

Production Problems and Artistic Freedom

As in the 1920s, much of the French production sector consisted of small firms. These were privately owned, unstable, and ephemeral. In some cases, filmmakers found themselves working for nothing after their employers absconded with the money. Other projects had to be halted when funds ran out. During the 1930s, 285 small firms made only one film apiece, and dozens more managed to produce only a few each. Even the largest producer, Pathé-Natan, made only sixty-four films throughout the decade—about as many as Paramount in the United States was producing annually.

Size was no guarantee against corruption and mismanagement. Two of the largest firms, formed through mergers during the healthier period of the late 1920s, ran into trouble in the mid-1930s. Rather than cooperating to form an oligopoly, as the big firms in more stable studio systems did, the French companies tried to drive each other out of business. In 1934, Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert nearly went bankrupt, and only a government-sponsored loan saved it. Pathé-Natan ran into similar problems by 1936, complicated by the fact that one of its heads, Bernard Natan, was embezzling funds. He went to jail, and the company was broken into smaller firms.

The situation was not altogether gloomy, however. Government regulation and the coming of sound both helped loosen the American hold on the French market. In 1935, for the first time since World War I, French films supplied more than half of the domestic market. Moreover, film attendance, which had dropped early in the Depression, began to rise, and theater income increased.

The decentralized structure of French film production helps explain why so many enduring films were made during this decade. Small companies lacked the elaborate production bureaucracy that characterized filmmaking in the United States, Germany, and the USSR. Instead, as in Japan, directors were often able to work on their own, supervising many phases of production. This situation, combined with a large number of talented actors, screenwriters, designers, cinematographers, composers, and other creative personnel, contributed to the creation of several distinctive trends.

Fantasy and Surrealism: René Clair, Pierre Prévert, and Jean Vigo

In the early 1930s, the French tendency toward fantasy during the silent era continued. The Surrealist tradition also lingered in a few works, though these were not as violent and chaotic as Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou* and *L' Age d'or* (see 8.26, 8.27).

René Clair's early musicals, *Sous les toits de Paris* and *À nous, la liberté!* (see 9.28–9.30), made him the most prominent French filmmaker. The technical challenges of early sound filmmaking inspired him. *Le Million* was another imaginative musical, centering on a lengthy comic chase for a lost lottery ticket in an elusive coat's pocket. Clair substituted music for diegetic sound effects and used extensive camera movement. He also staged parts of the chase in the manner of French cinema of the 1910s (**13.1**). Quasi-Surrealist playfulness appears occasionally, especially in a pawn shop that serves as the cover for a gang's criminal activities, where boots hanging into the frame from above suggest dangling corpses, and a mannequin seems to point a pistol (**13.2**). The final struggle over the coat looks and sounds as if the characters are playing a football match.

After two less interesting films, Clair departed for England, where he made one notable comedy, *The Ghost Goes West* (1935). Interrupted by the war in an attempt to return to France, he spent the war period in Hollywood. Although he returned to France and made occasional films until the mid-1960s, these never quite matched the originality and wit of this early period.

In 1932, Pierre Prévert directed another quasi-Surrealist film, *L' Affaire est dans le sac* ("It's in the Bag"), from a script by his brother Jacques, a major playwright and poet. Shot on a tiny budget and using sets from other movies, *L' Affaire est dans le sac* is an anarchic comedy concerning, among other things, people who sell, steal, and wear inappropriate hats and a rich industrialist's daughter who is courted by men of various social classes. The film uses an exaggerated style (**13.3**) to reinforce the oddities of the plot. After the failure of this film, the Prévert brothers

Le Million

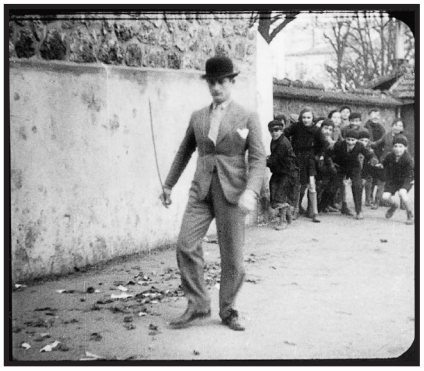
13.1 In *Le Million*, the police chasing a thief across a rooftop creates an image that could have come from a 1907 Pathé chase comedy.

Le Million

13.2 A comically Surrealist juxtaposition in a pawn shop as a hidden criminal draws a bead on an intruder in *Le Million.*

L'Affaire est dans le sac

13.3 Surrealist style in *L' Affaire est dans le sac*, as a mysterious stranger helps the hero into a car for a bizarre hat-stealing mission.



Zero for Conduct

Zero for Conduct

13.4, *left* In *Zero for Conduct*, the kindly teacher Huguet imitates Charlie Chaplin during recess, to the delight of the schoolboys.

13.5, *right* The pillow-fight scene in *Zero for Conduct* ends with a triumphant slow-motion procession of the schoolboys, with a musical accompaniment played partially backward.

were unable to make another together until a decade later, but Jacques scripted several of the most important French films of the era.

The most promising young filmmaker of the early 1930s, Jean Vigo, also worked in a Surrealist vein. He started with two short documentaries. The first, *À propos de Nice* ("Concerning Nice," 1930), drew on conventions of the city symphony genre of experimental cinema (see Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony p. 157). Its candid shots taken during carnival time harshly satirize the wealthy vacationers in a French resort town. The second, *Taris* (1931), is a lyrical underwater study of the great French swimmer Jean Taris. Vigo's main work consists of a brief feature, *Zero for Conduct* (1933), and *L' Atalante* (1934).

Zero for Conduct is the more overtly Surrealist of the two films, presenting boarding-school life from children's points of view. Its episodic story consists mostly of amusing, frightening, or puzzling scenes of their activities, as in the opening train ride when two schoolmates show off toys and pranks. Most of the teachers are seen as grotesques, with the exception of Huguet (**13.4**; **Video 13.1**), who encourages the boys to rebel. One night they defiantly start a pillow fight in their dormitory (**13.5**). The final scene shows four of the boys staging a rebellion during a commemoration day at the school. The film's antiauthority and anticlerical content led to its being banned; it was not shown publicly until 1945.

In *L' Atalante*, Vigo presents an intensely romantic story of a barge captain who marries a woman from a village along his route. After a short honeymoon period, she longs for something beyond the barge's routine. Intrigued by the exotic souvenirs of the first mate, Père Jules, and tempted by a passing peddler, she runs away to Paris. Her husband refuses to admit his longing for her (**13.6**), but, eventually, Père Jules tracks the wife down, and the couple are reunited.

Vigo died in 1934, at the age of 29, but, despite his small body of work, he is remembered as one of the great French filmmakers. His death and the inability of the Prévert brothers to make further films cut short the Surrealist impulse in French commercial filmmaking. Clair's

L'Atalante

13.6 After his wife's departure, the tortured barge captain of *L'Atalante* plays checkers with first mate Père Jules, surrounded by Jules's strange souvenirs. These odd objects provide the main Surrealist motif in the film.

Carnival in Flanders

13.7 Lazare Meerson, the greatest French set designer of the interwar period, created an authentic Renaissance Flemish town for *Carnival in Flanders*.

departure similarly made the fantasy genre less prominent in France.

Quality Studio Filmmaking

Many important French films of the 1930s were high-quality studio productions. Some were literary adaptations, such as *Crime and Punishment* (1935, Pierre Chenal), from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel. Two distinguished stage actors, Pierre Blanchar and Harry Baur, give impressive performances as Raskolnikov and Porphyre, and the elaborate interior sets display a lingering influence from German Expressionism.

Jacques Feyder, who had worked briefly in the Impressionist style during the 1920s, returned to France in 1932 after a short stay in Hollywood. His most famous film of this decade is *La Kermesse héroïque* (*Carnival in Flanders*, 1935), a comedy set in a Flemish town in the early seventeenth century. When news arrives that the Duke of Alba is leading Spanish troops toward the town, the men panic and hide, but the women welcome the invading army into their homes (and beds) for a festival. The delighted duke leads his troops away the next day, sparing the town. Of Belgian origin himself, Feyder insisted on a meticulously correct duplication of the architecture and costumes of the period (**13.7**).

Carnival in Flanders has been interpreted as favoring collaboration with the enemy at a time when the Fascist threat was growing. In fact, Feyder and Charles Spaak had written the script in the mid-1920s, when pacifist films were becoming common. They were unable to find a producer then, and the timing of the film's eventual appearance proved unfortunate. It was not well received in France or Belgium but was immensely popular in Germany and England, and it won awards in Europe and the United States.

Less prestigious and more typical of quality French filmmaking in the 1930s is Marc Allégret's 1934 *Lac aux dames* ("Women's Lake"). Its slim plot involves a young man who works as a swimming teacher at a Tyrolean lake and is besieged by female admirers. He has been separated from the woman he loves, and an innocent rich girl who develops a crush on him finally helps him reunite with her. As in many French films of this era, this conventional story gains interest through beautiful cinematography (**13.8**) and its stars. *Lac aux dames* introduced both Jean-Pierre Aumont and Simone Simon. The industry boasted many popular stars and character actors during the 1930s. Raimu, Michèle Morgan, Michel Simon, and Jean Gabin often proved to be drawing cards abroad as well—something that had seldom been the case in the 1920s.

Sacha Guitry, a successful author of sophisticated comic plays and fiction, turned to the cinema—starring in, adapting, and directing several of his own works. Critics and filmmakers deplored Guitry's unabashed defense of his "filmed theater," yet many of them shared the audience's delight in these witty, well-constructed comedies. Outstanding among them is *Le Roman d'un tricheur* (*The Story of a Cheat*, 1936), based on a Guitry novel about a confidence man and cardsharp. Guitry innovates by having the trickster's voice narrate the tale, filling in for all the characters' dialogue—women as well as men (**13.9**).

Lac aux dames

13.8 A picturesque location shot in *Lac aux dames*.

Le Roman d'un tricheur

13.9 The frame story in *Le Roman d'un tricheur* takes place in an unabashedly theatrical set representing a sidewalk café, but the narrator takes us into a series of flashbacks.

Le Drame de Shanghai

13.10 In *Le Drame de Shanghaï*, Pabst created a sense of the dangerous underworld of Shanghai.

Émigrés in France

Quite a few high-quality French films of this period were created by foreign, especially German, directors. Many German and French filmmakers moved between Berlin and Paris, and, even after most multilingual production had been abandoned in favor of dubbing or subtitles, many French films were still reshot in German versions, and vice versa.

G. W. Pabst had two lengthy sojourns in France. During the first, he directed a multilingual version of *Don Quixote* (1933), starring the legendary opera star Feodor Chaliapin. After a disappointing visit to Hollywood that resulted in a single undistinguished film, Pabst returned to France to direct three more features, all melodramas. In *Le Drame de Shanghaï* ("Shanghai Drama," 1938), the heroine, Kay, is a nightclub singer who has for years been working for an underworld gang in Shanghai; when her innocent daughter, who has been away at school for years, comes to visit, Kay tries to go straight but is forced to kill one of the gang members so that her daughter can escape from China just as the Japanese invade. Pabst used the exotic setting to create an effective film noir (**13.10**). He returned to Germany to care for his mother and resumed filmmaking during the war.

Max Ophüls also worked regularly in Paris during the 1930s, making seven intensely romantic features in the vein of *Liebelei.* In *Le Roman de Werther* ("The Romance of Werther," 1938), Ophüls adapted Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel of doomed love. The hero comes to serve as an official in a small town, falls in love with his superior's fiancée, Charlotte, and eventually commits suicide (**13.11**). Ophüls fled to the United States once World War II began.

Other émigrés found France a way station to Hollywood. Anatole Litvak, a Russian Jew who had worked for a while in Germany, fled the Nazis and worked briefly in France. *Mayerling* (1936), the story of a prince's doomed love for a commoner, was shot in a style virtually indistinguishable from that of polished Hollywood productions, and it was extremely popular abroad. Actors Charles Boyer and Danielle Darrieux became international stars; they and Litvak all went to work in Hollywood. Fritz Lang also paused briefly in France, having left Germany to avoid working under the Nazis. He made a fatalistic romantic drama, *Liliom* (1934), before moving on for a long-term stay in the United States. Similarly, Billy Wilder, Robert Siodmak, Curtis Bernhardt, and others worked briefly in France but soon went on to careers in Hollywood.

Le roman de Werther

13.11 Ophüls commented on the action using his characteristic camera movement in *Le Roman de Werther*, tilting up to a crucifix as a clergyman tells Charlotte to reject Werther's love.

Everyday Realism

Although many prestigious productions relied on polished technique, romantic stories, and stars, several films stressed everyday realism. Prominent among these is a

La Maternelle

13.12 In *La Maternelle*, Marie sees Rose as her mother, but resents Rose's romance with the school-board director.

La Maternelle

13.13 Realism in *La Maternelle*: Rose with Fondant, a child from an abusive home.

film that, like *Zero for Conduct*, deals sympathetically with children: *La Maternelle* (1933), by Jean Benoît-Lévy and Marie Epstein. Benoît-Lévy, who was primarily a documentarist, and Epstein, who had scripted three films for her brother Jean in the 1920s, had previously collaborated on some silent features on social issues involving children. *La Maternelle*, their most important film, focuses on neglected and abused children attending a kindergarten. An educated, but impoverished, young woman, Rose, takes a menial job there and becomes the object of the children's repressed longings for love—especially those of Marie, abandoned by her prostitute mother (**13.12**). Avoiding studio glamour and stars, Benoît-Lévy and Epstein filmed in an actual working-class kindergarten and used children with no acting experience (**13.13**). This simple story was well received by French and foreign audiences. As a result, Benoît-Lévy and Epstein collaborated again, on *Itto* (1934), one of the few films about France's North African colonies that treats the native population sensitively.

Realism was the guiding force behind another major filmmaker. Like Sacha Guitry, Marcel Pagnol was already a highly successful playwright, but, unlike Guitry's plays, his were leisurely character studies. On seeing *The Broadway Melody*, Pagnol decided that sound films were an ideal way of recording plays. He supervised the film adaptation of his stage hit *Marius* (1931), directed by Alexander

Harvest

13.14 Pagnol's celebration of fertility: as the couple sow their field in the final scene of *Harvest*, the heroine reveals to her husband that she is pregnant.

Korda, who was soon to revolutionize the British cinema by directing *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (see Export Successes p. 211). When the producer, Paramount, declined a sequel despite the film's huge success, Pagnol went on to produce *Fanny* (1932, Marc Allégret) himself. With the profits, he set up his own production firm, turning out one popular film after another. He directed the third entry in the trilogy, *César* (1936).

The Marius trilogy covers about twenty years in the lives of its three central characters, yet many of its scenes contain little action. Instead, the inhabitants of a waterside district of Marseille bicker and chat at length. Although the slow pace derived in part from the stage origins of the films, Pagnol was also striving to capture the meanderings and shifts in tone that characterize everyday conversation.

By 1936, Pagnol's success permitted him to equip his own studio facilities in Marseille. His actors and crew remained fairly constant from film to film, forming the "Pagnol family." They lived and worked together wherever the location scenes for the films were being shot. Pagnol's oft-quoted formula was "The Universal is attained by staying at home,"[1] and he made his most successful films of the late 1930s and early 1940s in the Provence region around his hometown, Marseille. They were less theatrical than the trilogy and told simple stories of village life. In *La Femme du boulanger* (*The Baker's Wife*, 1938), the departure of the baker's wife with another man causes the baker to stop making bread, and the villagers band together to fetch her back. *Regain* (*Harvest*, 1937) celebrates the fertility of the earth, as a lonely peasant and an outcast woman struggle to raise a family and run a farm in a deserted village (**13.14**).

POETIC REALISM

Many of the best-remembered French films of the 1930s belong to a group that has been termed *Poetic Realism*. This was not a unified movement, like French Impressionism

or Soviet Montage; it was a looser tendency. Poetic Realism films often center on characters living on the margins of society, either as unemployed members of the working class or as criminals. After a life of disappointment, these shabby figures find a last chance at intense, ideal love. After a brief period they are disappointed again, and the films end with the disillusionment or deaths of the central characters. The overall tone is one of nostalgia and melancholy.

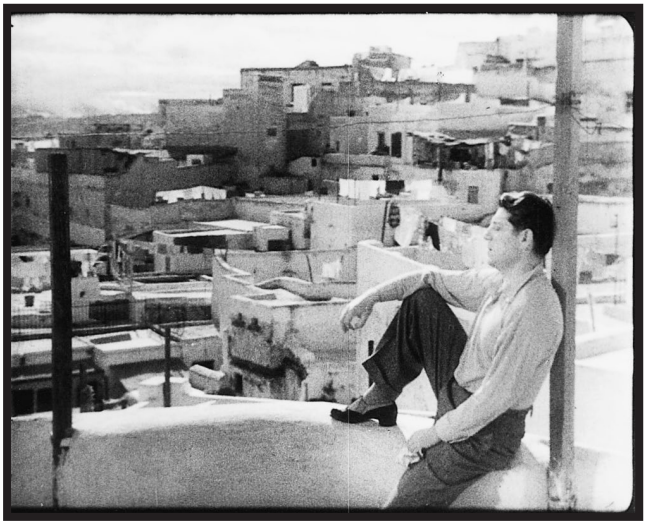
Doomed Lovers and Atmospheric Settings

There were some forerunners of Poetic Realism in the early 1930s. We have already examined Jean Grémillon's 1930 film *La Petite Lise* (see 9.26, 9.27), which provides a mature early example of this tendency. A convict returns from prison to find that his daughter has been forced into prostitution. When she accidentally helps kill a pawnbroker, he protects her by taking the blame for the crime. Another early example of the tendency is Feyder's *Pension Mimosas* (1934). Its story centers on a woman who runs a boardinghouse and falls in love with her adopted son. Her elaborate attempts to thwart his falling in love with anyone else lead to his suicide. Aside from this tragic plot, the film depends on the precise establishment of atmosphere through the settings—the boardinghouse of the title, a local casino, and other sets, all designed by Lazare Meerson (who did the sets for *Carnival in Flanders* and other important films of the decade).

Poetic Realism blossomed in the mid-1930s, and its leading filmmakers were Julien Duvivier, Marcel Carné, and Jean Renoir.

Duvivier's main contribution to the trend was *Pépé le Moko* (1936), a film that typifies Poetic Realism. Pépé is a gangster hiding out in the notorious Casbah section of Algiers, where the police dare not arrest him. Although he has a mistress already, he falls in love with a sophisticated Parisian, Gaby, who visits the district for a casual adventure. Their love is hopeless because if he leaves the Casbah he will be caught. Duvivier captures a sense of Pépé's confinement in the Casbah district, despite the fact that most of the shots were made either in the studio or in the south of France (**13.15**). At the end of the film, Pépé ventures out in order to leave Algiers with Gaby. He is arrested at the dock and asks permission to watch her ship depart; as it pulls out to sea, he kills himself. Such a fatalistic ending is typical of Poetic Realist films.

Pépé was played by Jean Gabin, one of the most popular actors of the period and the ideal trapped Poetic Realist hero. Handsome enough to play leads in light comedies and dramas, heavy-featured Gabin was also a plausible working-class protagonist. He starred in Marcel Carné's two major Poetic Realist films, *Quai des brumes* (*Port of Shadows*, 1938) and *Le Jour se lève* (*Daybreak*, 1939).


Pépé le Moko

13.15 *Pépé le Moko* uses setting to create a sense of the hero's entrapment in the Casbah of Algiers.

In *Quai des brumes*, Gabin plays Jean, a deserter from the French Foreign Legion who encounters a beautiful woman, Nelly (played by Michèle Morgan, who formed with Gabin the "ideal couple" of the period). They fall in love, but she is protected by a powerful gangster. Although Jean kills the gangster, he is himself gunned down by a member of the gang and dies in Nelly's arms. The foggy cinematography of German Eugen Schüfftan and the atmospheric sets by Alexandre Trauner, with their rain-dampened brick streets, created a look that typified Poetic Realism.

In *Le Jour se lève*, Gabin plays the protagonist, François, a worker who commits a murder and is trapped in his apartment by police. Throughout the night he recalls the circumstances leading up to the present; we see in flashbacks how the villainous Valentin (the murder victim) had seduced the innocent young woman whom François loves. The simple story was not as important as the brooding atmosphere, created in part by Trauner's set (**13.16**). This studio-built version of a working-class district illustrates the mixture of stylization and realism in Poetic Realism. Maurice Jaubert's music supplies a simple drumbeat for the opening and closing scenes. Above all, Gabin's portrayal of François pensively awaiting his fate created the ultimate hero of Poetic Realism (**13.17**). *Le Jour se lève* was released just three months before the German invasion of Poland. During the war, Carné would emphasize doomed romance and downplay realism in two of the most popular films of the era, *Les Visiteurs du soir* and *Children of Paradise*.

Le Jour se lève

13.16 The tall, thin set in *Le Jour se lève* emphasizes the isolation of the hero, trapped in his apartment on the top floor.

Le Jour se lève

13.17 One of the most famous images of Poetic Realism: with the police outside, François looks out his window, surrounded by bullet holes (*Le Jour se lève*).

The Creative Burst of Jean Renoir

The most significant director of 1930s French cinema was Jean Renoir. Although his filmmaking career stretched from the 1920s to the 1960s, his output during this one decade was a remarkable case of concentrated creativity. He made a wide variety of films, some in the Poetic Realist strain. His first sound film, *On purge Bébé* (roughly, "Baby's Laxative," 1931), was a farce that Renoir made in order to get backing for other projects. His next film was completely different and can be seen as another forerunner of Poetic Realism. *La Chienne* ("The Bitch," 1931) concerns an unhappily married accountant and amateur painter; he stumbles into an affair with a prostitute whose pimp exploits the hero by selling his paintings. The hero ends up murdering the prostitute and becoming a cheerful panhandler. *La Chienne* introduced many elements that would characterize Renoir's work, including virtuoso camera movements, scenes staged in depth, and abrupt switches of tone. The hero's murder of his mistress would seem to be the sort of tragic ending typical of Poetic Realism, yet he simply wanders off into contented poverty. Similarly, despite the film's realistic style, Renoir begins and ends it with a curtain of a puppet theater, emphasizing its status as a performance.

Renoir's other notable films of the early 1930s include *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (*Boudu Saved from Drowning*, 1932) and *Toni* (1935). *Boudu* is the comic story of a tramp saved from suicide by a bourgeois bookseller who tries unsuccessfully to reform him. *Toni* is an Italian drifter who comes to France to work in a quarry. He marries his landlady Marie, but falls in love with Josefa, who marries another man. When Marie learns the truth, she attempts suicide (**13.18**). Renoir's film was produced by Marcel Pagnol and shot entirely on location in southern France. Its largely unknown actors spoke the dialect of the region. *Toni* became a crucial forerunner of the Italian Neorealist movement (see Chapter 16).

In the mid-1930s, Renoir made a few films influenced by the leftist Popular Front group. He also made a lyrical short feature, *Une Partie de campagne* (*A Day in the Country*, 1936). This film delicately balances the humorous and tragic. A Parisian family picnicking at a country inn encounter two young men who seduce the wife and young daughter—to the delight of the wife and the regret of both the daughter and her seducer, who fall in love and must part. Throughout the film, Renoir conveyed both the pleasure of the outing and the sense of loss that would follow it (**13.19**). Because of bad weather, the film was never actually finished, and it was released only in 1946, with two titles summarizing the missing portions.

Renoir's *Grand Illusion* (1937) took a pacifist stance at a time when war with Germany was increasingly probable. This drama of French prisoners in World War I suggests that class ties are more important than national allegiances. The upper-class German camp commander and the French officer understand each other better than do the officer and his French subordinates. When the French officer sacrifices his life so that some of his men may escape, the German commander plucks the only flower in the prison, suggesting that their class is dying out (**13.20**). In contrast, the working-class Maréchal and his Jewish friend Rosenthal gain hope by escaping at the end.

This contrast between the declining aristocratic class and the working class reappeared in a more sardonic form in Renoir's last film of the decade, *The Rules of the Game* (1939). Here a famous aviator causes confusion by falling

Toni

13.18 A typical Renoirian use of deep staging, as Toni bends over Marie after she has tried to drown herself and his friend rushes in from the background (*Toni*).

A Day in the Country

13.19 Again, Renoir uses deep staging as one of the young men opens a window and watches the wife and daughter swinging in the inn yard in *A Day in the Country.*

Grand Illusion

13.20 In *Grand Illusion*, Commander von Rauffenstein picks the last flower in his prison camp in tribute to the French officer's death.

in love with the wife of a French aristocrat who is in turn trying to break off with his mistress. These characters form part of a large gathering at the aristocrat's château. The servants' intrigues parallel the romantic confusion among the upper class, as a local poacher gets a job as a servant and immediately tries to seduce the gamekeeper's wife. The many romantic entanglements come to a head in a dazzling party scene at the château, as characters dodge in and out of rooms and forge and break relationships. Despite the characters' foolish actions, no one becomes a villain. As one of them remarks, "In this world, the scary thing is that everyone has his reasons." This line has often been taken as emblematic of Renoir's cinema, where there are seldom villains—only fallible people reacting to each other.

In *The Rules of the Game*, Renoir employed large, intricate sets and extensive camera movement to convey the characters' constant interactions (**13.21**; **Video 13.2**). He also relied on a technique that would become much more common in the 1940s and after: the *long take*, in which the camera holds on a subject without a cut, often moving to follow action, for an unusually long period. For example, in the party scene of *The Rules of the Game*, one shot tracks back and forth to follow two romantic entanglements involving jealous men (**13.22–13.28**). In the confusion, ultimately someone dies and the cause is covered up by the host. The film implies that the outworn aristocratic class is fading.

The Rules of the Game was a failure at the time of its release. Audiences did not understand its mixture of tones, and it was perceived as attacking the ruling classes. The film was released just before France entered World War II, and it was soon banned. Reconstructed in the 1950s, it swiftly gained critical acclaim.

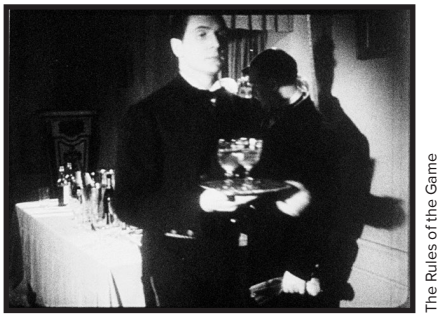
The Rules of the Game

13.21 The long hallway set in the château of *The Rules of the Game*, where characters enter and exit unpredictably, conveying a sense of bustling activity in all the rooms.

Other Contributors

Despite the weakness of the production sector, the French cinema of the 1930s created a high proportion of important films, thanks partly to the large number of talented people working in the industry. Lazare Meerson designed the sets for Clair's films *Sous les toits de Paris* and *À nous, la liberté!* and for Feyder's *Carnival in Flanders*. He also trained Alexandre Trauner, who worked consistently with Carné. Major French composers worked in the cinema as well: Georges Auric provided the music for *À nous, la liberté!*; Arthur Honegger scored *Crime and Punishment*; Joseph Kosma contributed the haunting music for *A Day in the Country*. Maurice Jaubert composed music for *Zero for Conduct*, *L' Atalante*, *L' Affaire est dans le sac*, *Quai des brumes*, *Le Jour se lève*, and other films before his death in 1940 during the German invasion. Similarly, a surprisingly small number of scriptwriters contributed to many of the significant films of the decade, the two most important being Charles Spaak (several Feyder and Renoir films) and Jacques Prévert (Carné and Renoir films).

13.22 As the shot begins, we see the servants at the party, watching the offscreen entertainment. In the center of the frame, the gamekeeper (in cap), who suspects his wife of being unfaithful, looks in through the doorway (*The Rules of the Game*).



13.23 The camera tracks right to follow a servant with a tray of drinks ....

13.24 ... past another doorway, where the gamekeeper, again in the center rear, peers in, hoping to catch his straying wife.

13.25 As the camera moves farther, we glimpse the drunken hostess seeming to yield to the seduction of a wealthy neighbor.

13.26 The camera moves further right to reveal the man who loves her, watching this exchange, while at the left the gamekeeper appears again, looking for his wife.

13.27 Finally the hostess and her prospective lover move to leave ....

13.28 ... and the camera holds on them until they disappear in the distance.

BRIEF INTERLUDE: THE POPULAR FRONT

During the 1930s, the gap widened between right-wing and left-wing political parties. Leftists struggled against the rise of Fascist elements in France. Before 1934, leftist parties did not cooperate with one another: the Parti Communiste Français ("Communist Party of France," or PCF) worked against the more moderate Socialists, and both disdained the middle-class Radical Socialists. In various countries, the Communists tried independently to defeat the Fascists. By 1933, however, the German Communist Party had failed to prevent Hitler's ascension to power.

In early 1934, the French political scene changed rapidly. Financier Serge Stavisky was revealed as a swindler who had the blessing of high government officials. Right-wing rioting brought down the Radical Socialist government. The PCF responded with further riots, and several people were killed. The PCF decided to join forces with the rival Socialists, and in July a coalition party called the Popular Front was formed. In the autumn of 1935, even the moderate Radical Socialists were admitted into the Front.

By now the Depression was hitting the working class hard; the number of unemployed reached a record 460,000 by late 1935, and wages had fallen substantially. Economic problems and a fear of Fascism led to a Popular Front victory in the elections in the spring of 1936. Socialist Léon

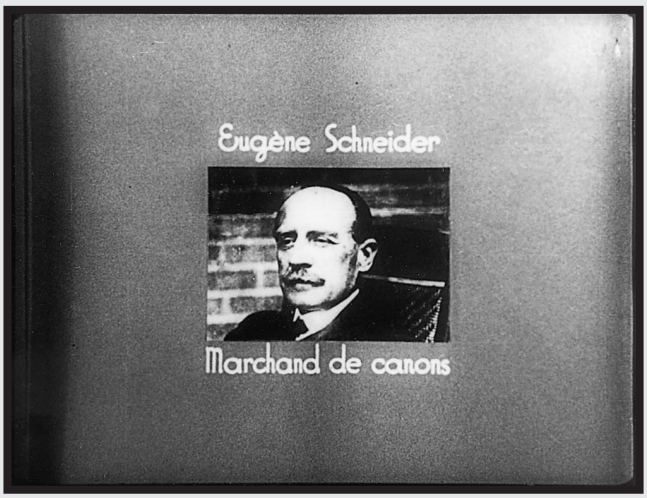
POPULAR FRONT FILMMAKING: *LA VIE EST À NOUS* AND *LA MARSEILLAISE*

La Vie est à nous was made in early 1936, to be used in the Popular Front's election campaign. It was largely financed through collections taken up at Communist Party meetings, and both the cast and crew donated their labor. It was shot quickly, in about two weeks. Although often referred to as a Renoir film, those who worked on it stressed that *La Vie est à nous* was a collaborative project. Renoir supervised the production and directed a few sequences, and other scenes were directed by Jacques Brunius, Jean-Paul Le Chanois, and Jacques Becker. Completed a few weeks before the May elections, the film was shown at Popular Front meetings and rallies.

La Vie est à nous was innovative in its form as well as in its production circumstances. Taking further the mixture of staged and documentary footage Bertolt Brecht and Slatan Dudow had used in *Kuhle Wampe* (see 14.4), Renoir's team mixed scenes and documents in a collage style. What begins as a documentary about France is revealed to be a lecture staged in a classroom; we follow some of the children out into the street as they discuss their poverty, and then a woman directly addresses the camera, giving a straightforward message. Other elements include still photographs, occasional intertitles, newsreel footage, and signs. Several Popular Front officials appear as themselves, yet well-known actors play the workers and peasants who support them. In one scene, a movie screen behind an industrialist illustrates what he is talking about (**13.29**). Later a "family photo album" mocks the "200 families" of France (**13.30**). At one point, the filmmakers show newsreel footage of Hitler speaking but substitute a dog's barking on the sound track.

La Vie est à nous

13.29 In *La Vie est à nous*, an industrialist complains of how workers have destroyed equipment and burned farm produce to protest low wages and prices; on the screen behind him, a film shows scenes of the destruction.



La Vie est à nous

13.30 The "200 families" were the richest in France and were commonly blamed by leftists for the country's financial woes. Here a "family album" lampoons real-life target Eugène Schneider, "cannon merchant" (*La Vie est à nous*)..

La Vie est à nous disappeared after the May elections, and a print resurfaced only in 1969. It was then hailed for its inventive approach and became highly influential.

La Marseillaise is a historical epic depicting the events of the French Revolution surrounding the fall of the monarchy in 1792. Made in support of the Popular Front, the film was to be financed through a subscription system: members of the large labor union, the Confédération Générale du Travail, would buy coupons good toward the cost of tickets when the film eventually appeared. Not enough tickets were purchased, however, and Renoir set up a special company to produce the film. This firm resembled the many little one-film production companies in France during this period. *La Marseillaise* had a commercial release in early 1938, but by that time the Popular Front's mass support had dissipated.

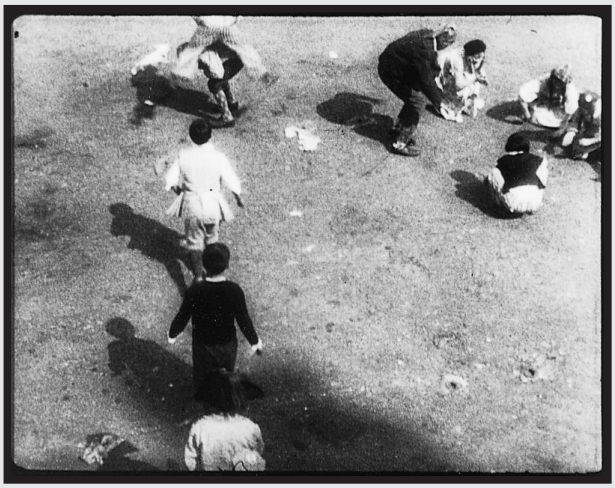
The film was unusual in its approach to patriotic history. Renoir refused to make Louis XVI and the aristocrats of his court into stock villains. Instead, he treated them sympathetically, as dignified members of a dying class, rather like the upper-class figures in *Rules of the Game* (**13.31**).

(continued)

POPULAR FRONT FILMMAKING: *LA VIE EST À NOUS* AND *LA MARSEILLAISE*, continued

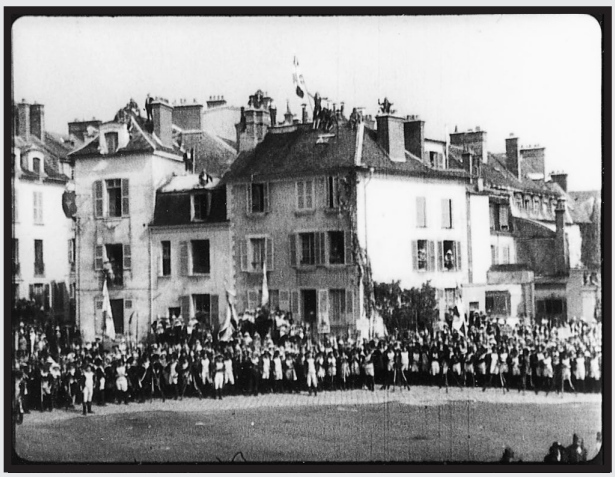
La Marseillaise

13.31 In *La Marseillaise*, a group of French aristocrats in exile listen nostalgically to a song about France.



La Marseillaise

13.32 A tracking shot begins on some children playing leapfrog ... (*La Marseillaise*)



La Marseillaise

13.33 .... moves to the right past a large crowd looking off right ...

La Marseillaise

13.34 ... pauses on boys playing marbles ...

La Marseillaise

13.35 ... and ends on a group of men battering down the gates of the Tuileries Palace—an event that will lead to the abolition of the French monarchy.

Instead of concentrating on leaders of the revolution, Renoir centers his film on a band of soldiers from Marseille who march to Paris with the fighting song that will become the national anthem. In keeping with this emphasis, the film uses few stars and gives main roles to minor actors with regional accents. Renoir's long takes and camera movements allow him to take a bottom-up approach to history, encompassing both trivial and momentous events in a single shot (**13.32–13.35**).

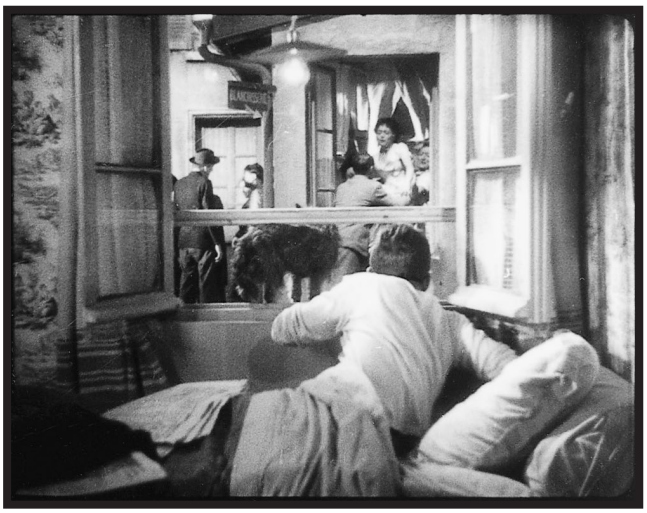
Blum became head of the government. Blum's government passed important legislation benefiting the working class, including a forty-hour week and paid vacations.

There were soon divisions within the Popular Front, however. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in July 1936, Blum wanted to support the Republican cause against Franco's Fascist troops. Right-wing groups and elements of the Popular Front opposed this move. Controversial economic decisions, such as proposals to nationalize certain industries, led to further dissension, and in June of 1937, Blum's government toppled.

Brief as it was, the Popular Front had a notable effect on the cinema. Although the Communists and the Socialists had each produced a few short propaganda films in the early 1930s, their first joint effort came in 1936. In January, the Popular Front formed a group called Ciné-Liberté to make films and publish a magazine. Members of the group included Jean Renoir, Marc Allégret (who had directed *Fanny* and *Lac aux dames*), Jacques Feyder, and Germaine Dulac. Ciné-Liberté produced a feature film to be used as propaganda in the upcoming elections: *La Vie est à nous* ("Life Belongs to Us"). Both the Communists and the Socialists continued to make a few short propaganda and documentary films during the 1930s. The last major left-wing feature was *La Marseillaise* (1938). As Renoir was the most prominent director in Ciné-Liberté, he was a logical choice to supervise the collectively made *La Vie est à nous* and to direct the epic production of *La Marseillaise* (see Popular Front Filmmaking: *La Vie est à nous* and *La Marseillaise* box).

Aside from its direct participation in the production of a few films, the Popular Front inspired several commercial films. Foremost among these were two about workers' cooperatives. Renoir's *The Crime of Monsieur Lange* (1935) concerns life in a building that houses apartments, a laundry, and a publishing firm. The publisher, Batala, exploits his workers, mismanages the business, and seduces an innocent laundress. When he flees his creditors, Monsieur Lange, one of his writers, leads the workers in reorganizing the publishing firm into a successful cooperative.

Although Renoir's previous film, *Toni*, had been concerned with the working class, *Monsieur Lange* was his most overtly left-wing film to date and was largely responsible for Renoir's being asked to supervise *La Vie est à nous*. It is one of the rare cases where Renoir included a truly villainous character, the monstrous Batala. Renoir used his distinctive technique to suggest the unity among the people of the entire building by organizing the setting around a central courtyard across which the characters interact. Deep staging juxtaposes events in different parts of the building (**13.36**).



The Crime of Monsieur Lange

13.36 Deep staging in *The Crime of Monsieur Lange* simultaneously shows characters in the concierge's apartment in the foreground, the courtyard in the middle ground, and the laundry in the background.

Julien Duvivier's *La Belle équipe* ("The Glorious Team," aka *They Were Five*, 1937) begins with five unemployed workers. An ironic juxtaposition places two of them before a vacation poster (**13.37**), at a time when many working-class people could never afford to leave their grim urban neighborhoods. After the five men win the lottery, they determine to start a cooperative riverside café near Paris. Many little touches indicate the egalitarian quality of the project: each of the five has a sign over his bed with the word "President," and the café's name is Chez Nous ("Our Place"). Yet various problems gradually lead two of the protagonists to drop out of the project, and one dies in an accident during a party at the unfinished café. By the end, the remaining two have resolved their jealous feud over a woman and preside over Chez Nous's grand opening (**13.38**). In fact, Duvivier had wanted an unhappy ending in which Jean kills Charles over the woman they both love and is arrested while sitting in the empty café (**13.39**). The producer, however, insisted on the happy ending.

Duvivier's original intention for *La Belle équipe*'s ending suggests that the main films inspired by the Popular Front were not very far removed from Poetic Realism. Although the villainous Batala is killed in *The Crime of Monsieur Lange*, Lange and Valentine must pay the price by fleeing from France. *La Belle équipe* would have ended with the cooperative project in a shambles. The aspirations of the Popular Front are evident in a less obvious way in the Poetic Realist films that deal sympathetically, if pessimistically, with working-class heroes.

La Belle équipe

13.37 Jean and Mario, two of the unemployed heroes of *La Belle équipe*, stand in front of a poster advertising skiing holidays ("Why shiver in Paris? Build your health among the eternal snows").

La Belle équipe

13.38 Charles and Jean, the remaining protagonists, introduce the triumphal final dance that signals the success of their café (*La Belle équipe*).

La Belle équipe

13.39 The pessimistic final shot of the original ending of *La Belle équipe*: as Jean is arrested for the murder of his partner, he declares: "It's all over. It was a wonderful idea."

FILMMAKING IN OCCUPIED AND VICHY FRANCE

The Situation in the Film Industry

When Germany unleashed World War II by invading Poland on September 1, 1939, France and Great Britain honored their diplomatic commitments and declared war on Germany. Many French filmmakers were mobilized, and production of twenty films was suspended.

Poland collapsed swiftly, however, and the British and French did little to prevent it. The months from September 1939 to May 1940 comprised the *drôle de guerre*, or "phony war." During this time, two million French troops were in the field, but virtually no fighting occurred. It was widely assumed that an Allied blockade would eventually defeat Germany. In October 1939, film production had resumed, and it continued throughout the phony war.

During April and May of 1940, Germany attacked again, occupying Denmark and moving swiftly into Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium. On June 5, Germany invaded France; meeting weak resistance, it occupied Paris on June 14. Two days later a right-wing French government was set up in Vichy, a resort town. The southern portion of France remained an "unoccupied" zone for more than two years, with the Vichy government holding power at the pleasure of the Germans.

The film industry was enormously disrupted by these events. Jews, leftists, and others fled into the unoccupied zone or went abroad. Feyder, for example, made one film in the south and then went to Switzerland in 1942; he was unable to direct again until after the war. Renoir worked in the United States during the 1940s. And some refugees returned to the occupied zone after production resumed there in June 1941. Two separate film industries developed.

Vichy France During late 1940, the Vichy government created the Comité d'Organisation de l'Industrie Cinématographique (COIC) to support and control the film industry. Producers had to undergo an elaborate application process to get permission to make a film, and censorship under the Vichy regime was even harsher than that in the German-controlled zone. In addition, the rightist government strove to eliminate Jews from the film industry.

The southern zone had only a few small studios, including Pagnol's in Marseille. Equipment and raw stock were scarce and sometimes had to be obtained on the black market. Producers also faced a lack of funding. Until May 1942, films made in the unoccupied zone were banned from the German zone; thus they showed only in the limited markets of southern France and French North Africa. Moreover, there were few French investors in the area.

Some financing came clandestinely from Jewish and American sources or openly from Italian investors. For example, the French firm Discina was closely linked with the Scalera company of Rome. The two firms coproduced some important films, including Jean Delannoy's *L'Eternel retour* (1943), Carné's *Les Visiteurs du soir* (1942), and Carné's *Les Enfants du paradis* (1945, completed by Pathé after Italy's defeat). Italian firms invested in other film enterprises in southern France and also provided a market for some French films.

The COIC helped alleviate financial problems by arranging for low-interest government loans for production.

Films made with such loans include Grémillon's *Lumière d'été* ("Summer Light," 1943) and *Le Ciel est à vous* ("The Sky Is Yours," 1944) and Robert Bresson's *Les Anges du péché* ("Angels of Sin," 1943). The COIC also attempted to foster quality production with an annual prize of 100,000 francs for the best films of the year. *Les Visiteurs du soir* won in 1942 and *Les Anges du péché* in 1943. Later, once southern films were allowed into the German zone, they shared in the generally high profits of the war period.

Occupied France The situation in the occupied zone was quite different than in southern France. Initially no French film production was permitted, and a ban on imports of American, British, and French films from the Vichy area gave the Germans a monopoly on screenings. Some German films, especially the infamous *Jud Süss* (see Attacking the "Enemies" of the Reich p. 239), were successful. Audiences preferred French films, however, and cinema attendance dropped in 1941. In May of that year, German officials allowed French production to resume. Many filmmakers who had fled returned to the better-equipped studios of Paris. Once new French films began appearing in the cinemas, attendance rose again. With no competition from American films, French production actually became more profitable during the war.

Why did the German authorities permit French production? For one thing, it was widely assumed at that point, by the Germans and many French, that Germany would win the war. Its leaders planned to create a "New Europe," under German control. France, it was assumed, would contribute to that new order. Moreover, strong European production could help Germany break the American domination of world markets, thus fulfilling—though in a less cooperative spirit—the old Film Europe goal of the 1920s. A healthy French film industry could also demonstrate to other occupied countries the benefits of joining with the Germans.

In addition, there was considerable German investment in France's film industry. That investment came mainly through the formation in 1940 of a Germany company, Continental, in Paris. Continental was a subsidiary of the giant firm Ufa, which, as we saw in The Nazi Regime and the Film Industry, was becoming the single centralized film company in Germany. Of the approximately 220 features made in both parts of France during the Occupation, 30 were produced by Continental. The largest French producer, Pathé-Cinéma, made only fourteen films during the same period. Most production companies were still small firms, making from one to eight films during the war. However, Continental was vertically integrated, owning its own studios, laboratories, and the biggest French theater chain; it released its films through Ufa's Paris distribution subsidiary. Continental signed up several major French stars and directors and produced some of the most popular—and controversial—films of the Occupation.

German censorship of French films was surprisingly lenient, concentrating on eliminating references to the United States and Great Britain. One area of official control was strict, however. Several regulations were passed to prevent Jews from participating in the film industry, and prewar films with Jewish actors were banned. During the war, about 75,000 French Jews were sent to death camps in Germany, and few of them survived. Most Jewish filmmakers, however, managed to flee or hide, and some kept working clandestinely.

France was divided until November 1942, when Germany occupied the southern portion, keeping the Vichy regime as a figurehead government. From then on, the southern production facilities functioned mainly as places for Parisian firms to go for location shooting.

It is sometimes assumed that all French filmmakers who worked in France during the Occupation were collaborating with the enemy. Many, however, felt they were keeping the French film industry alive during an extremely difficult period. While a few films reflected Fascist ideals, others were pro-French. Quite a few filmmakers also served secretly in the French Resistance movement. There was a resistance group for cinema, the Comité de Libération du Cinéma Français; members included directors Jean Grémillon and Jacques Becker and actors Pierre Blanchar and Pierre Renoir.

The Allied military push that eventually defeated the Germans began in late 1942. From this point on, the French Resistance expanded. Allied bombing within France struck some film facilities; five studios were destroyed and 322 theaters damaged or leveled. A shortage of materials hampered production late in the war, and, by July 1944, all production ceased. Filmmakers in the Resistance movement fought in the general uprising during August, while secretly filming the liberation of Paris.

Some filmmakers suspected of collaborating were punished. A few, such as Sacha Guitry and Maurice Chevalier, were imprisoned but then exonerated. Director Henri-Georges Clouzot was briefly barred from filmmaking for having made a supposedly anti-French film, *Le Corbeau.* To see why such punishment was meted out, we need to look at the kinds of films made during the Occupation.

Films of the Occupation Period

Most films made during the Occupation were comedies and melodramas of the sort that had appeared before the war. Censorship in the German and Vichy zones forced filmmakers to avoid subject matter relating to the war and domestic social problems. As in Italy, a "cinema of distraction" was the norm.

The most notable films of this period fit into the prestige category, close to what would later be called the "Tradition of Quality" (see Chapter 17). Belying their straitened circumstances, these films were expert productions, with impressive sets and major stars. Cut off from contemporary reality, they conveyed a mood of romantic resignation. Some films, however—vague allegories of French indomitability—also could be interpreted as suggesting resistance to oppression.

Perhaps the first such film was Christian-Jaque's *L'Assassinat du Père Noël* ("The Murder of Santa Claus," 1941). Set in a snow-covered mountain village, it tells the story of a mapmaker, Cornusse, who plays Santa Claus for the local children every year (**13.40**). On Christmas Eve, odd events occur: a sinister figure steals a saint's relics from the church, and the village's baron, returned from an enigmatic absence, courts Cornusse's ethereal daughter. All ends well, with Cornusse's visit miraculously curing a crippled boy. Cornusse tells him that a French sleeping beauty will someday be awakened by a Prince Charming. Although *L' Assassinat du Père Noël* was the first production by Continental, the German firm, its symbolic message was presumably apparent to many French filmgoers.

Marcel L'Herbier, who had been a major figure in the French Impressionist movement of the 1920s, made his most personal film since that time with *La Nuit fantastique* ("The Fantastic Night," 1942). In it, a poor student works in a Parisian produce market and dreams nightly of an angelic woman in white. One day the woman wanders through the market, taking him on a strange journey through a nightclub, a magic shop, and an insane asylum. When he wakes again, the woman reappears, and they go off together into a permanent dreamlike realm. L'Herbier revived Impressionist subjective techniques for *La Nuit fantastique*, using reversed sound, slow motion, and split-screen effects to convey the hero's dreaming visions. Similarly, Pierre Prévert managed to rekindle something of the anarchic spirit of *L' Affaire est dans le sac* in his 1943 feature *Adieu ... Leonard!* Leonard, a thief, undergoes a series of comic adventures and then ends up abandoning society and going off with his friends in a caravan.

Escapist fantasy of a more romantic, yet morbid, kind is apparent in two major films of the midwar period. Marcel Carné's *Les Visiteurs du soir* ("Visitors of the Evening," 1942), a romance set in medieval times, employs elaborate costumes and settings (**13.41**). Yet, because of shortages, many period costumes were made of cheap cloth and the crew injected poison into the fruit in the banquet scenes to prevent hungry extras from eating it. In *Les Visiteurs*, a man and a woman are sent by the Devil to corrupt the inhabitants of a castle. The man falls in love with the princess he is supposed to seduce, and, ultimately, the Devil turns them both into statues (**13.42**). This ending has been widely interpreted as an allegory of France's resistance to German Occupation. Two prominent Jewish film artists, set designer Alexandre Trauner and composer Joseph Kosma, collaborated anonymously on the film.

A similar story of doomed love is Jean Delannoy's *L'Eternel retour* ("The Eternal Return," 1943), from a Jean Cocteau script based on the Tristan and Isolde legend. Cocteau set the story in contemporary times but on an isolated island. The hero, Patrice, goes to fetch a young wife, Natalie, for his elderly uncle. Falling in love with her, he lives out a doomed existence in which his evil cousin Achille plots against him. Eventually Patrice and Natalie, both coldly beautiful, idealized characters, accept death as the only way that they can stay together. This sort of fatalism typified much French filmmaking of the Occupation period.

The era was also notable for two films by Jean Grémillon, whose *La Petite Lise* had been a major early sound film and an early entry in the Poetic Realist tendency. In *Lumière d'été* (1943), a love triangle among older people—Cri-Cri, a dancer who now runs a mountain hotel; Patrice, a local nobleman; and Roland, an alcoholic artist—is played off against a more innocent romance between a young engineer, Julien, and a young woman, Michèle. The film's settings (**13.43**) and acting were distinctive for the period. Because of its sordid depiction of its characters, the film was nearly banned by the Vichy authorities, who demanded strong, upright French figures.

L'Assassinat du Père Noël

13.40 In *L' Assassinat du Père Noël*, Cornusse plays Santa Claus for the villagers while mysterious events are occurring.

Les Visiteurs du soir

13.41 The Devil's emissaries approach the immense castle set in the opening scene of *Les Visiteurs du soir.*

Lumière d'ete

13.43 An effective use of a location setting in the mountains in Grémillon's *Lumière d'été.*

Les Visiteurs du soir

13.42 The Devil hears the heartbeats of his victims and realizes he has failed to completely subjugate them (*Les Visiteurs du soir*).

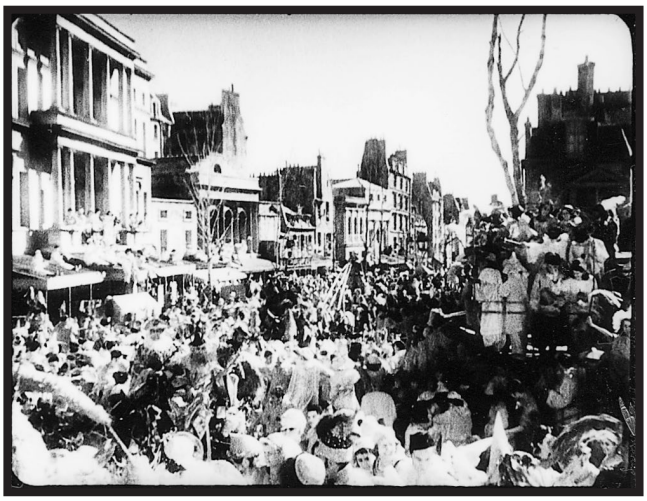
Les Anges du péché

13.44 Robert Bresson used the nuns' black-and-white clothing, in combination with careful lighting and composition, to create an arresting visual style in *Les Anges du péché*.

The most important filmmaker to begin a career during the Occupation period was Robert Bresson, whose first feature, *Les Anges du péché*, appeared in 1943. An audacious film noir set in a convent, it deals with nuns who try to reform female criminals. Bresson's characteristic narrative of spiritual redemption emerged in mature form, with a rebellious nun and a murderess unpredictably helping each other find peace. The austere visual style also looked forward to Bresson's later films (**13.44**). Bresson's next film, *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* ("The Ladies of the Bois de Boulogne") began production late in the Occupation period but was not released until 1945, a year after the liberation of France. It shares some traits of the Occupation films because its narrative is cut off from contemporary society, dealing with a rich woman who tries to take revenge on her ex-lover by tricking him into marrying an ex-prostitute.

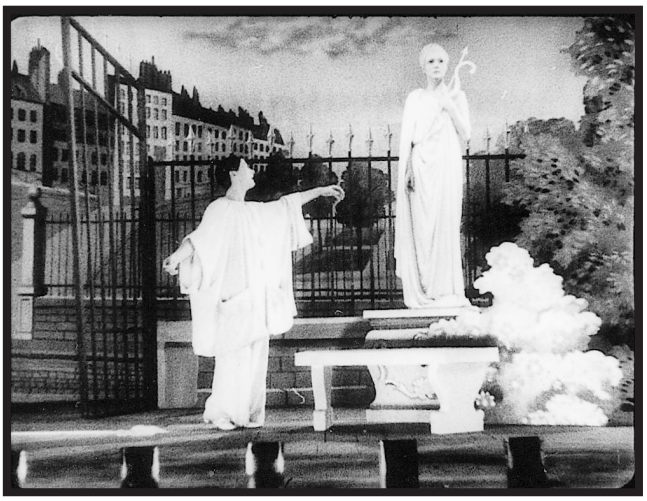
Perhaps the two most famous films of the Occupation period are Carné's *Les Enfants du paradis* (*Children of Paradise*, 1945), and Clouzot's *Le Corbeau* 1943. *Children of Paradise* was made under difficult circumstances, in the lean late-war period. A vast tapestry of the theater world in nineteenth-century Paris (**13.45**), the story traces the romantic entanglements of several characters, centering on the mime Baptiste Debureau and the actress Garance, whose thwarted love echoes their onstage roles (**13.46**; **Video 13.3**).

Nothing could be further from the mood of romantic melancholy that pervades *Children of Paradise* than the cynicism of *Le Corbeau* ("The Crow"). The film is set in a small French town where a series of poison-pen letters signed "Le Corbeau" reveal various secrets about several of the most respected members of the community. The panicky townspeople react with unreasoning



Children of Paradise

13.45 Jewish designer Alexandre Trauner, working clandestinely on *Children of Paradise*, created enormous sets reconstructing the theater district of mid-nineteenth-century Paris.



Children of Paradise

13.46 The bittersweet pantomime involving Pierrot, Columbine, and Harlequin in *Children of Paradise* suggests the sense of lost love that pervades the film's offstage romances.

suspicions. The protagonist, Dr. Germain, receives a letter falsely accusing him of having an affair with a married woman and of being an abortionist. He is later seduced by Denise, a young woman whom the community is quick to condemn for her loose morals—despite the fact that she is one of the few to refuse to enter into the hysterical suspicions and accusations prompted by Le Corbeau's letters (**13.47**).

At the time of *Le Corbeau*'s release in 1943, its unpleasant subject matter led to its being widely condemned as anti-French—especially because it had been produced by the German-backed Continental company. Some have argued, however, that *Le Corbeau* was an attack on the right-wing values that undergirded the Vichy government. The heated debates in the "Clouzot affair" led in 1945 to the filmmaker's being forbidden to work. Clouzot did not direct again until 1947, when the complex and realistic crime film *Quai des orfevres* reestablished his career.

The end of the Occupation brought many changes for French filmmaking, including the renewed competition with imported American films. Yet most of the filmmakers of the wartime period kept working, and the

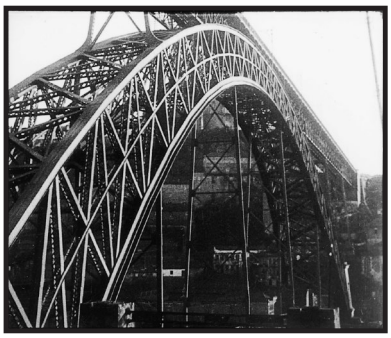
Le Corbeau

13.47 At the funeral of one of the "Crow's" victims in *Le Corbeau*, the villagers pass around another poison-pen letter.

decentralized industrial structures survived into the postwar era.

REFERENCE

1. Quoted in Pierre Lagnan, *Les Années Pagnol* (Renens: Five Continents, 1989), p. 111.



Douro, Faina Fluvial

CHAPTER 14

LEFTIST, DOCUMENTARY, AND EXPERIMENTAL CINEMAS, 1930–1945

Deutsche Waffenschmieden

The era from the early Depression to the end of World War II brought dramatic changes for filmmakers who worked outside the mainstream commercial industry. Economic hardship and the shift to sound technology made it very expensive for documentarists and experimenters to work independently. Some took advantage of the cheaper 16 mm format, but 35 mm remained the standard for theatrical exhibition.

The rise of Fascism, civil wars in China and Spain, and the move toward global conflict pushed many filmmakers, often leftist in their sympathies, to politicize their work. The Russian Revolution was still recent enough that Communists in many countries hoped similar uprisings would occur around the world. Some who had begun by making lyrical films turned to documentaries, recording epochal events. At first, political films tended to be pacifist, equating militarism with imperialist aggression. Later, when General Francisco Franco led the attempt to impose a Fascist regime in Spain and the other Axis powers began invading their neighbors, leftists supported the war against them.

THE SPREAD OF POLITICAL CINEMA

During the 1920s and early 1930s, Soviet films, particularly those of the Montage movement, galvanized viewers around the world. Some audiences were interested primarily in these films' stylistic innovations, but others also saw them as models for leftist cinema. Politicized filmmakers displayed the influence of the Soviets. Thus, this era's leftist films, though made in different countries, often resemble each other.

14.1, *left* *Workers Newsreel Unemployment Special* (1931, edited by Leo Seltzer) documented widespread hunger and protests against government policy, such as this longshoremen's march.

14.2, *right* Two homeless men satirize the welfare system in *Pie in the Sky*.

The United States

Activist filmmakers in the United States started by confronting the issues of poverty and racism. Communist groups had produced a few documentaries during the 1920s, but the first regular association was formed in 1930. Several film enthusiasts in New York joined with a Communist still-photographers' organization to create the Workers' Film and Photo League. (The word *Workers* was soon dropped.) Soon a national network of Film and Photo Leagues grew up, cooperating to shoot footage for newsreels that could be shown at socialist gatherings. The filmmakers received no payment, and costs were made up by donations, benefits, and screenings of classic films. The leagues used silent cameras purchased cheaply after the advent of sound. Their early films mainly recorded demonstrations, strikes, and hunger marches that took place around the country (**14.1**).

Members of the Film and Photo League in New York included Paul Strand and Ralph Steiner, who had made lyrical documentaries (Strand's *Manhatta*) and abstract films (Steiner's H_2O) in the 1920s (see Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony p. 157). Photographer Margaret Bourke-White joined the group, as did Thomas Brandon, who later would become an important 16 mm distributor for film societies and college courses. The leagues' other activities included providing lecturers to leftist gatherings, writing criticism that denounced Hollywood films and upheld alternative cinema, and protesting screenings of Nazi films.

During 1935, the New York branch published a short-lived newsletter, *Filmfront*, that contained translations of essays by leftist theorists and critics, including Dziga Vertov. A report issued by the leagues in 1934 made explicit the links with his kino-eye theory (see Documentary Features Gain Prominence p. 161):

> "The Film and Photo Leagues" were rooted in the intellectual and social basis of the Soviet film . . . in the same way as the Soviet cinema began with the kino-eye and grew organically from there on . . . the Leagues started also with the simple newsreel documents, photographing events as they appeared to the lens, true to the nature of the revolutionary medium, they exploited in a revolutionary cinematic way.[1]

By the mid-1930s, however, some members were moving on to more ambitious projects, and the leagues were moribund by 1937.

In 1935, several filmmakers left to form a loose collective, Nykino (Russian for "cinema now"), whose name indicated their imitation of Soviet cinema. Nykino made only a few films, including documentaries and one notable satire on the sanctimonious promises made to the poor during the Depression. *Pie in the Sky* (1934) was set principally in a dump, where actors improvised gags on church and government institutions (**14.2**). By early 1937, Nykino was transformed into a nonprofit firm, Frontier Films. Frontier was quite successful for a few years in making longer documentaries with impressive photography by, among others, Steiner and Strand. Steiner was cinematographer on *People of the Cumberland* (1938, directed by Sidney Meyers and Jay Leyda), which dealt with unionization in the Cumberland Mountain region.

Frontier's last and longest film was *Native Land*, shot in the late 1930s, though not released until 1942. It was directed by Strand and Leo Hurwitz and photographed by Strand. *Native Land* is a quasi-documentary, restaging actual incidents in which working-class people struggle against oppressive forces of capitalism. In one episode, sharecroppers who try to organize and obtain higher prices for cotton are chased by a posse; a Black farmer and a white one flee together and are both shot down (**Video 14.1**). The incident stresses that workers of different races must cooperate to defend themselves. Other episodes show peaceful union activities broken up by police or company goons (**14.3**).

Leftist cinema declined during the 1940s. Anti-Communist pressures increased, and intellectuals objected to Stalin's purges and show trials. Fearing the spread of Fascism, the Communists also decided to support the American government during the war. Some former

Native Land

14.3 A staged shot in depth from *Native Land*, showing police looming ominously in the foreground as they break up a peaceful demonstration by strikers.

Kuhle Wampe

14.4 Brecht's technique of distancing the audience from the action appears after the suicide in *Kuhle Wampe*, when a neighbor woman turns to the camera and repeats the ironic phrase used earlier in an intertitle, "One fewer unemployed."

members of the Film and Photo Leagues worked on government- and corporate-sponsored documentaries.

Germany

Leftist filmmaking began relatively early in Germany because that country had been the first to import the Soviet films of the 1920s. Moreover, the Communist Party and other left-wing groups in Germany became more active as the Nazis grew stronger in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

In 1926, the International Workers' Relief, a Communist organization concerned with fostering the growth of the USSR, formed Prometheus, a film firm that would distribute Soviet films. It scored a big success in 1926 with *Potemkin* (see Chapter 6) and subsequently released many imported pictures. During the late 1920s, Prometheus also produced German films, including Piel Jutzi's *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück* (1929). By this time, Germany was suffering sharply rising unemployment as a result of the Depression. Jutzi's film reveals in grim detail the life of a family trapped in a tiny apartment; when the son is arrested as a thief after losing his job, his mother commits suicide. Only his sister, who joins a Communist demonstration with her fiancé (see 8.7), represents a sense of hope for German society. The film's title was an ironic commentary on the plight of the poor, for whom suicide seems one path to "happiness."

Prometheus also produced the most prominent German Communist film of this era, *Kuhle Wampe* (1932, Slatan Dudow), named for the workers' camp in which it is set. The script was written by Bertolt Brecht, the leftist playwright who invented the "epic theater" and whose *The Threepenny Opera* had recently been an enormous hit. Brecht believed that theater spectators should feel detached from the onstage action so that they could think through the implications of the events. He applied this idea in *Kuhle Wampe*, which explores unemployment, abortion, the situation of women, and other issues in a series of episodes from the life of a single family. The son commits suicide after failing for months to find a job (**14.4**; **Video 14.2**). Ultimately, the daughter of the family, nearly abandoned by her fiancé after she becomes pregnant, finds help through Communist youth activities, and the family gains a semblance of normal life at the tent city of the unemployed, Kuhle Wampe. Intertitles, songs by composer Hanns Eisler, and a lengthy sequence at a Communist youth sports festival all help give *Kuhle Wampe* the feel of a political tract.

Prometheus went out of business in 1932, and another producer finished *Kuhle Wampe*. By that time, however, the Communist cinema was fighting a losing battle. The Nazis came to power in 1933, and Brecht and Eisler both ended up working in the Hollywood cinema—where their approach fit in uneasily.

Belgium and the Netherlands

In Belgium, which had suffered a lengthy occupation by the Germans during World War I, documentarists and experimentalists were quick to respond to the growth of Fascism. Charles Dekeukeleire, who had manipulated narratives in daring ways in his silent films (see Experimental Narrative p. 159),

Flamme blanche

14.5 A Soviet-influenced composition in *Flamme blanche*, with a dynamic low-angle framing isolating a threatening police officer's head against a blank sky.

Misère au Borinage

14.6 Workers carry a homemade picture of Karl Marx during a reenacted demonstration scene in *Borinage*.

turned to political film with *Flamme blanche* ("White Flame," 1931). He combined documentary footage of a Communist rally with staged scenes of police hunting down a young demonstrator hiding in a barn (**14.5**).

Dekeukeleire's friend Henri Storck had started a ciné-club in his hometown, the Belgian seaside resort of Ostende, in the 1920s. He also had made several poetic documentaries and city symphonies, including *Images d'Ostende* (1929). Then his career took a political turn. In 1932, he made an anti-Fascist, pacifist compilation documentary, *Histoire d'un soldat inconnu* ("History of an Unknown Soldier"). Storck's editing juxtaposed stock footage of government and religious leaders supporting the military with imagery that created a bitterly ironic comment on warmongering.

Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, who had also been involved in a ciné-club and made films in abstract and city-symphony genres during the 1920s (see Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony p. 157), became more politically oriented. After the success of *The Bridge* and *Rain*, he was invited to make a documentary on the steel industry, *Song of Heroes* (1932), in the Soviet Union. Then, Henri Storck was invited by a left-wing ciné-club in Brussels to make a film exposing the oppressive treatment of coal miners in the Borinage region of Belgium, and he asked Ivens to collaborate with him.

The result was *Misère au Borinage* ("Misery in Borinage," generally known as *Borinage*, 1933). Storck and Ivens made the film clandestinely, dodging authorities to film workers reenacting clashes with police, evictions, and marches (**14.6**). *Borinage* was banned in Belgium and the Netherlands, but it was widely seen in ciné-clubs. Ivens returned to the Netherlands to make another film on the exploitation of workers, *New Earth* (1934), in which he showed how thousands of workers who helped create dikes and new land suddenly ended up unemployed. Thereafter, Ivens's remarkable career took him around the world, as he recorded left-wing activities over the next several decades.

Great Britain

Socialist ciné-clubs and filmmaking groups were particularly active in Britain. This was partly because strict censorship laws forbade public screenings of Soviet and other leftist films. In late 1929, several Communist trade unions created the Federations of Workers' Film Societies, which distributed 35 mm prints of German and Russian films for noncommercial screenings.

It soon became apparent, however, that 16 mm equipment was better suited for this effort. The Socialist Film Council (founded in 1933) and the Workers' Theater Movement (1934) emerged to distribute both imported and British films in 16 mm prints. The Workers' Film and Photo League and the Progressive Film Institute were established to coordinate production and distribution.

Most films produced by these groups were made by leftist sympathizers who were not themselves members of the working class. One exception was Alf Garrard, a carpenter and amateur filmmaker. After a successful strike by his union, he received support from the Film and Photo League to secretly film scenes of actual construction work and combine them with restaged scenes of the strike enacted by his fellow workers (**14.7**). The film was intended to promote unionism. Dozens of other films of this era documented unemployment, marches, strikes, and other aspects of labor's struggle.

The middle of the decade saw a shift in British political filmmaking. In 1935, the International Communist Party changed its policy. Rather than concentrating on class struggle, it encouraged leftists around the world to oppose the spread of Fascism. Partly as a result, during

Construction

14.7 Shots taken with a hidden camera made *Construction* (1935) a convincing view of working-class conditions.

the second half of the 1930s, European groups reacted to two civil wars, in Spain and China.

International Leftist Filmmaking in the Late 1930s

The Spanish Civil War began in 1936, when Fascist leader Francisco Franco instigated an insurrection against the elected Republican government. While Hitler and Mussolini both backed Franco, the United States, Britain, and France withheld aid. The USSR helped those loyal to the Spanish government. This uneven conflict led thousands of volunteers to rally to the Spanish Republican cause either to fight or to succor victims of the war.

Filmmakers supported the cause. Russian cinematographer Roman Karmen shot newsreel footage, which Esfir Shub (see Documentary Features Gain Prominence p. 161), later edited into a compilation feature, *Spain* (1939). The American leftist production firm Frontier made *Heart of Spain* (1937), shot on the spot and edited in New York by Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz. Ivor Montagu's Progressive Film Institute made a 16 mm civil war film, *The Defense of Madrid* (1936), which Montagu shot in the Spanish capital while it was under attack.

After *Borinage* and other films in the early 1930s, Joris Ivens was prominent enough that important leftist writers and artists brought him to the United States. His first assignment was *Spanish Earth* (1937), on the Civil War, written and narrated by Ernest Hemingway. Ivens emphasized the juxtaposition of ordinary events—women sweeping a street, men planting a vineyard—with the destruction of war (**14.8**). American composers Virgil Thomson and Marc Blitzstein arranged a score from Spanish folk songs. President and Mrs. Roosevelt viewed and approved the film, but its circulation was limited mainly to film clubs.

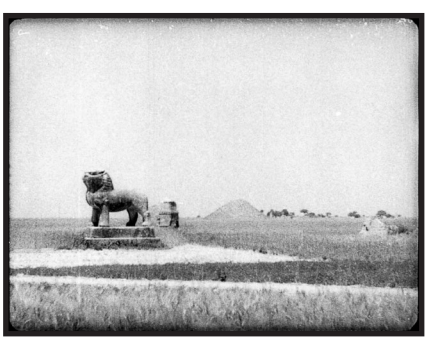
Spanish Earth

14.8 A shot in *Spanish Earth* juxtaposes defensive barbed wire with more traditional sights of Madrid.

The Chinese civil war received less attention, primarily because little was known in the outside world about Mao Zedong's attempt to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek's government—a struggle that had been going on since the 1920s. In 1937, American Harry Dunham managed to reach Mao's forces in their stronghold in Yenan and record events there. The resulting footage was edited in the United States at Frontier Films by Jay Leyda and Sidney Meyers and released as *China Strikes Back* (1937). This film introduced Mao to much of the world.

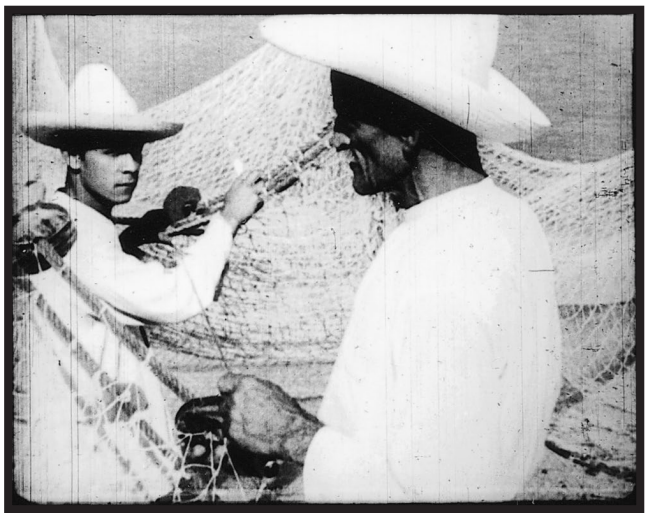
Ever interested in revolutionary struggles, Joris Ivens also went to China, but the official government prevented him from journeying to Mao's stronghold. With American backing, Ivens made *The Four Hundred Million* (1938)—named for China's population at that time. Unable to show the civil war, Ivens concentrated on the country's struggle against the Japanese invasion and on its vast landscapes (**14.9**). The Maoist revolution would continue to fascinate Ivens, and five decades later he would make his final film in China.

Aside from these major conflicts, oppressed groups around the world attracted the attention of leftist filmmakers. In 1934, for example, the radical administration of Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas financed *The Wave*. Scripted and photographed by Paul Strand and directed by the young Austrian Fred Zinneman, *The Wave* dealt with Indian fishermen who try to resist unfair exploitation by local buyers. Although it was a fiction film, it used



The Four Hundred Million

14.9 In *The Four Hundred Million*, Ivens suggests the vast, bleak beauty of China.



The Wave

14.10 Fishermen work on their nets while discussing their plight in *The Wave*.

nonactors and documentary-style filming to emphasize the reality of the social injustice portrayed (**14.10**). Leftist films became less common during the 1940s, as World War II claimed filmmakers' attention.

GOVERNMENT- AND CORPORATE-SPONSORED DOCUMENTARIES

The United States

After Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration as President in early 1933, the American government sought to alleviate the problems relating to the Depression. As a result, some filmmakers who had started in the early 1930s as members of leftist Film and Photo Leagues moved into government-sponsored documentary filmmaking.

In the mid-1930s, the Resettlement Administration wanted to disseminate information on the Dust Bowl, the southern plains states whose drought conditions contributed to the Depression. Pare Lorentz, a young intellectual interested in politics, had never made a film, but he was given a $6,000 budget to make *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936). Convinced of the socially beneficial uses of cinema, he wanted to show *The Plow* as a short in theaters. He hired Ralph Steiner, Paul Strand, and Leo Hurwitz, all members of the New York Film and Photo League, as cinematographers. The group found themselves up against the Hollywood establishment, which regarded their work as government-supported competition. Just finding a firm willing to sell them raw film stock was difficult. A major selling point was achieved when prominent composer Virgil Thomson agreed to write a score for the film, drawing on folk songs.

The River

14.11 By showing a cabin threatened by soil erosion, *The River* suggested the need for government action.

Although no distributor would release it, *The Plow That Broke the Plains* proved a success. The manager of New York's Rialto Theater scheduled it and publicized it widely, resulting in bookings at thousands of theaters nationwide. This triumph and White House approval led to a higher budget for Lorentz's next film, *The River* (1937), photographed by Willard Van Dyke and again provided with a rousing score by Thomson. The filmmakers demonstrated how logging had led to massive erosion in the Mississippi valley (**14.11**). A flood forced them to extend the shooting schedule but the dramatic footage supported arguments for the benefits of the government's Tennessee Valley Authority dam program. After Lorentz's previous triumph, Paramount distributed *The River*, and it also proved widely popular.

Roosevelt admired *The River* and founded the US Film Service to make films for various government agencies. Lorentz, as head of this service, assembled a group of filmmakers to work on several projects. Joris Ivens, for example, was brought in to make *Power and the Land* for the Rural Electrification Agency. Lorentz, however, proved to have little administrative ability, and the service was dissolved in 1940. Its projects were turned over to individual government bodies, so *Power and the Land* (1941) was finally completed by the Rural Electrification Agency. Soon, with the beginning of the war, the military would make many documentaries, while others were commissioned from Hollywood firms.

Some of the filmmakers who worked in the Film and Photo Leagues and for the US government were able to find institutional sponsorship to make significant documentaries. For example, the American Institute of Planners commissioned *The City* for the 1939 New York World's Fair. This film was directed by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke, from an outline by Pare Lorentz. Again music played a key role, with Aaron Copland composing the score.

The City resembled government documentaries, particularly *The River*, in its presentation of a problem (overcrowded cities) followed by a solution (rebuilding through city planning). Humorous vignettes caught by concealed

The City

14.12 *The City* emphasizes urban congestion in a sequence of outbound weekenders inching along a road, ironically accompanied by jaunty Aaron Copland music.

Drifters

14.13 *Drifters* deemphasized the scientific and economic side of British fisheries, stressing the dynamism and dignity of the workers' labor.

cameras, combined with fast pace, yielded entertainment value as well as informational content. In one celebrated scene, an automated café serves food to lunch-hour customers as if they were on an assembly line. Other scenes emphasize traffic and congestion (**14.12**). Sponsorship of documentaries by institutions and corporations would become increasingly important in later decades.

Great Britain

While the American government's sponsorship of documentaries was short-lived, in the United Kingdom a major national filmmaking body was built up during the early 1930s. It produced so many classic documentaries that for years historians focused a great deal of attention on this realist streak of British cinema, often to the exclusion of more entertainment-oriented filmmaking.

This burgeoning of the documentary mode resulted largely from the efforts of Scottish-born John Grierson. Educated in the United States during the 1920s, Grierson was impressed by how powerfully American cinema and advertising shaped mass audiences' responses. He deplored, however, the way Hollywood cinema missed its opportunity to combine entertainment with education. And Grierson admired the Soviet cinema, not simply for its artistic innovations but also because the government had sponsored films designed to affect viewers intellectually; he helped prepare the version of *Potemkin* released in the United States. He also strongly approved of Robert Flaherty's tactic of locating corporate funding outside the commercial-film industry for *Nanook of the North* (sponsored by a fur company). At the same time, he thought Flaherty was too fascinated by primitive cultures and too little concerned with influencing modern society.

Grierson returned to Britain in 1927 and encountered a sympathetic supporter in Sir Stephen Tallents, head of the Empire Marketing Board, a government institution charged with promoting British products around the world. Tallents arranged financing to allow Grierson to make a documentary on herring fisheries (supposedly because a key official in the Treasury was an expert on the herring industry). The result was a short feature, *Drifters*, released in 1929. Grierson's interest in Soviet Montage cinema was apparent: he cut quickly among parts of the fishing boats, and his images presented ordinary work as heroic (**14.13**).

British exhibitors were not keen on showing documentaries, so *Drifters* premiered at the Film Society, on a program with *Potemkin*. Its favorable press coverage led to bookings in many commercial theaters. Still, throughout the 1930s, Grierson and his colleagues faced resistance to commercial screenings of their films, and Grierson increasingly stressed distribution of 16 mm prints to schools and educational groups.

In 1930, the Empire Marketing Board hired Grierson to form a permanent film unit. He recruited a number of young, mostly liberal filmmakers. This group tried to foster a positive image of the working class. Most were inexperienced and learned cinematic technique on the job. They shot short, silent films that usually received limited distribution. Many were simply advertisements shown in railway stations. In 1931, attempting to vitalize the board's film unit, Grierson hired Robert Flaherty (see Robert Flaherty: *Man of Aran* and the "Romantic Documentary" box).

ROBERT FLAHERTY: *MAN OF ARAN* AND THE "ROMANTIC DOCUMENTARY"

After the commercial failure of *Moana* in the mid-1920s, Robert Flaherty had briefly collaborated with F. W. Murnau on *Tabu* (see Murnau and His Influence at Fox p. 139). After withdrawing from that project, he was at loose ends when Grierson asked him to join the Empire Marketing Board's film unit.

Flaherty embarked upon a film on British industries, shooting in factories and mines. He proved too undisciplined for government filmmaking, but some of his voluminous footage formed the basis for *Industrial Britain* (1933), one of the few successes enjoyed by Grierson's Empire Marketing Board unit.

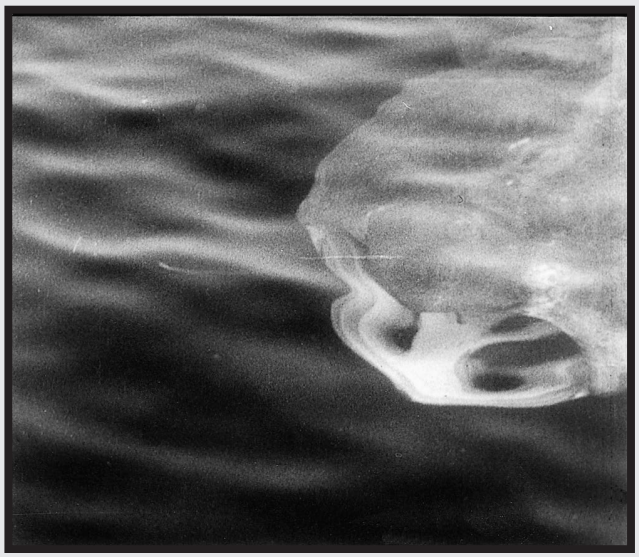
By 1931, Flaherty had conceived a project on the bleak, remote Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland. Gaumont-British, Britain's largest film company, agreed to fund a feature. Flaherty and his crew spent years hunting out local people to play roles. Flaherty emphasized the tireless efforts of the Arans' inhabitants to compost seaweed and grow crops on rocky land and to fish among gigantic waves; this drama was embodied in the story of a couple and their young son.

Flaherty also added a scene of the islanders harpooning huge basking sharks from open boats, even though such hunts had ceased long before the current inhabitants had been born. (He had similarly resurrected an obsolete tattoo ritual in *Moana*.) He had harpoons constructed, based on antiques, and the islanders learned how to execute the dangerous shark hunt. Flaherty's insistence on such suspense yielded some dramatic scenes. In particular, there is a haunting moment when the young boy Mikeleen climbs down the cliffs to the water's edge and finds himself looking down into the maw of a huge shark (**14.14, 14.15**).

Man of Aran finally premiered in 1934 and did well, both with critics and audiences. It was picked as best film at the Venice Film Festival. Yet it also stirred up considerable controversy. Many documentarists thought it was escapist fiction. Leftists, including some connected with the Film and Photo League, attacked it for failing to deal with the social situation of the islanders, including their exploitative absentee landlords. Despite his reservations about Flaherty, Grierson defended the film:

> It is of course reasonable for later generations of film-makers to want a documentary tougher, more complex, colder and more classical, than the romantic documentary of Flaherty. It is fitting that it should want a documentary in which both material and theme are found in our own social organization and not in literary idyll. But there are considerations one must watch carefully. The first one is that Flaherty was born an explorer, and that is where his talent is. . . .
>
> Not half-a-dozen commercial films in the year can compare with *Man of Aran* in simple feeling and splendid movement. I am all for congratulating Flaherty on pushing the commercial film brilliantly to its limit. I am all for commending his fortitude in yet another sickening encounter with commercialism.[2]

Nevertheless, *Man of Aran* led to a break between Grierson and Flaherty. Flaherty, unable to find work, returned to the United States, where he would make *The Land* (1942) and *Louisiana Story* (1948).



Man of Aran

14.14, 14.15 Flaherty used the traditional continuity editing technique of shot/reverse shot to create an unexpected encounter between a young boy and a giant shark in *Man of Aran*.

In 1933, before the Empire Marketing Board could turn to more ambitious films, it was dissolved. Tallents moved over to handle public relations for the General Post Office (GPO), a large government institution that oversaw many areas of communications, including radio and early television. Tallents took Grierson and his circle with him, and they became the GPO Film Unit. This unit eventually included several people who would be among the country's most important documentarists: Basil Wright, Arthur Elton, Edgar Anstey, Harry Watt, Alberto Cavalcani, and Stuart Legg.

The GPO Film Unit was prolific. Many of its films were simple didactic works distributed mainly to schools. In some cases, where a more poetic or dramatic approach was taken, the films had wider theatrical circulation. One of the most popular was *Night Mail* (1936, Basil Wright and Harry Watt). Its subject was simple: the journey of the overnight train from London to Glasgow. Its form, however, was complex and lyrical. A promising young composer, Benjamin Britten, contributed the score, while W. H. Auden wrote a poetic voice-over commentary. The imagery moved from such mundane details as a farmer receiving his newspaper to distant views situating the train in the grandeur of the British countryside (**14.16**).

Grierson also sought backing from industry, and the GPO Film Unit's staff made several classic documentaries on diverse subjects. Production of tea in British colonies in India and Ceylon was an important industry, and, in 1934, Basil Wright directed *Song of Ceylon* for the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board. This film deals only briefly with the tea trade, concentrating instead on the beauties of Ceylonese culture, both past and present. Indeed, the impressive images and dense sound track hint that modern commerce is an intrusion on this society.

In 1935, Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey directed a different kind of sponsored film. The Gas, Light and Coke Company commissioned *Housing Problems* in hopes of promoting the use of gas heat and light in modern housing. Elton and Anstey responded by experimenting with direct recording of sound on location to interview working-class people in their own apartments. This interview approach has since become pervasive in both documentary films and television. Though the subjects apparently were previously interviewed and are repeating their memorized statements for the camera, the effect of real people describing their problems remains poignant (**14.17**).

This emphasis on private sponsorship led to a major shift in the GPO Film Unit. Arthur Elton left to form the country's most important corporate film unit for Shell Oil. Stuart Legg and Basil Wright each set up an independent production firm to make films for commercial sponsors. Grierson himself quit the unit in 1937, creating a firm to match sponsors with filmmakers; in 1939 he went to Canada, where he was instrumental in founding the National Film Board.

Grierson was replaced as head of the GPO Film Unit by Alberto Cavalcanti, the Brazilian-born filmmaker who had helped establish the city-symphony genre in the 1920s with *Rien que les heures* (see Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony p. 157). His main film for the GPO was *Coal Face* (1936), a documentary on the coal industry that made use of a complex sound track with a rhythmic

Night Mail

14.16 The train in *Night Mail*, with accompanying narration: "This is the night mail crossing the border / Bringing the check and the postal order / Letters for the rich, letters for the poor / The shop at the corner and the girl next door."

Housing Problems

14.17 Crude location lighting and a direct interview approach emphasize the stark reality of a working-class woman's situation in *Housing Problems*.

commentary and music by Britten. Cavalcanti and the other remaining staff moved away from Grierson's fierce independence and concentration on an educational approach. Under Cavalcanti, the unit produced films that drew more upon the narrative techniques of commercial cinema, as in *North Sea* (1938, Harry Watt). Influenced by Flaherty, the group employed reenactments of events.

In 1940, the GPO Film Unit was absorbed by the Ministry of Information. World War II was in its early stages, and soon the unit became central to wartime documentary filmmaking.

WARTIME DOCUMENTARIES

The beginning of World War II abruptly changed the status of documentary filmmaking. Leftist filmmakers who had criticized capitalist governments recognized the necessity for switching to a position supporting the battle against Fascism. Military establishments within the warring countries called on professional filmmakers, and major directors previously associated primarily with fiction films switched to documentaries. Documentaries became far more popular. In those days before television news, families who had members in the military or who were directly endangered could witness wartime events at their local theaters, in newsreels and documentaries.

Hollywood Directors and the War

The United States stayed out of the escalating European conflict until December 7, 1941, when the Japanese launched an unprovoked, devastating attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Germany declared war on the United States a few days later, and global conflict became inevitable.

The US government called directly upon the Hollywood establishment to make films supporting the war effort. Immediately after Pearl Harbor and the German declaration, the Pentagon asked the prominent Columbia director Frank Capra to make a series of propaganda films. These were to explain to American soldiers and sailors why their country was in the war and why they were obliged to help foreign countries in the fight against Germany, Italy, Japan, and other members of the Axis. It was especially necessary to explain America's new alliance with the USSR, which had previously been portrayed as a threat to the American public.

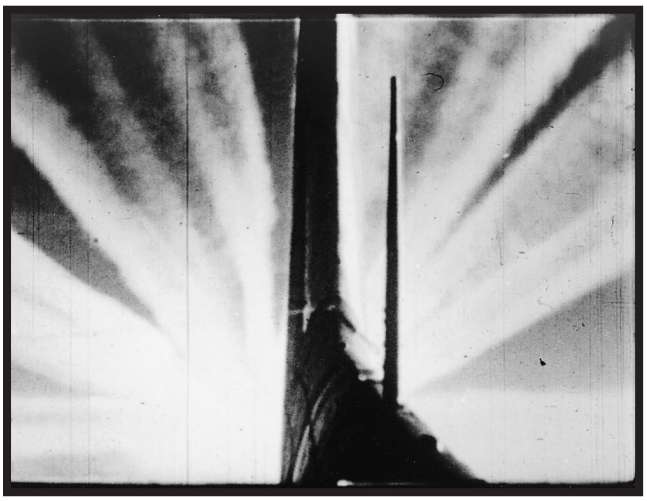
Capra himself entered the military as a major. He recalled watching Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* and deciding that the best way to motivate soldiers to fight was by drawing upon existing films that portrayed the enemy's power. He created a series called "Why We Fight," based primarily on footage captured from German and other enemy sources, combined with material from the Allies. The directors he supervised compiled this footage, explaining military strategies through animated maps supplied by the Disney studio. A forceful narrator told the audience exactly what to think about the images (**14.18**). The series consisted of seven films: *Prelude to War* (1942), *The Nazis Strike* (1942), *Divide and Conquer* (1943), *The Battle of Britain* (1943), *The Battle of Russia* (1943), *The Battle of China* (1944), and *War Comes to America* (1945). Major Hollywood figures such as actor Walter Huston (as narrator) and composer Alfred Newman worked anonymously on some of the films. The series was required viewing for military recruits, but some of the films were also shown publicly.

The Battle of Britain

14.18 In *The Battle of Britain*, animation turns the map of Europe into a Nazi whale about to devour the United Kingdom.

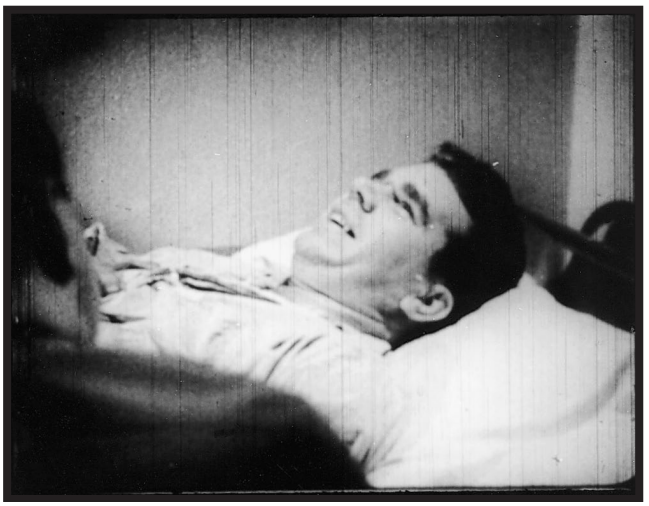
Other Hollywood directors soon entered the service, recording aspects of the war in powerful documentary films. John Ford joined the Navy as the chief of the Field Photographic Branch. Using 16 mm cameras, Ford and his team were on the scene to record the Japanese attack on Midway island, capturing a memorable shot of the American flag being hoisted during the battle. Ford edited this footage with shots of actors speaking the sentiments of archetypal American people; he also used traditional folk music on the sound track. The result was a paean to American strength: *The Battle of Midway* (1942, coproduced by 20th Century-Fox and the Navy). Ford was later decorated for wounds received during the attack, and *The Battle of Midway* garnered an Oscar as the best documentary.

William Wyler served in the Air Force, where he supervised *Memphis Belle* (1944), a film on bombing runs



Memphis Belle

14.19 Lightweight 16 mm cameras carried during bombing runs created spectacular aerial footage for *Memphis Belle*, including this shot of a plane's tail against the squadron's vapor trails.



Let There Be Light

14.20 In *Let There Be Light*, the camera lingers on the jubilant face of a traumatized soldier who has regained his voice under treatment; his therapist is glimpsed in the left foreground.

over Germany (**14.19**). John Huston had established his reputation as a director of fiction films early in the war with *The Maltese Falcon*. He made two exceptionally candid films during the war. In *San Pietro* (generally known as *The Battle of San Pietro*, 1944), he was assigned to show why the Allied advance through Italy was taking so long. He used footage taken by frontline camera operators as the troops moved through Italian villages. The film came close to being banned because Huston juxtaposed soldiers' voices with shots of their body bags. After some revision, the film was released.

Huston ran up against further censorship problems with his next project, *Let There Be Light*. The military initially delegated him to make a film about the rehabilitation of victims of shell shock. Employing direct sound, Huston shot extensive candid interviews with traumatized soldiers undergoing therapy. This film was virtually unprecedented in using unrehearsed, direct recording of people's responses to offscreen questions (**14.20**). *Let There Be Light* captured the soldiers' illnesses so effectively that it was banned by the US government and thus had no influence on the subsequent development of documentary filmmaking. It did not become available to the public until the 1970s. Nevertheless, it anticipated the documentaries of the Direct Cinema era, and especially the "synthetic" approach of the 1970s (see Chapter 24).

Great Britain

As a result of Germany's invasion of Britain's allies in Eastern Europe, primarily Poland and Czechoslovakia, Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. Less than a year later, on August 13, 1940, the Germans launched a bombing campaign against Britain, known as the Battle of Britain or the Blitz. Bombers targeted civilian areas as well as military sites, and thousands of Londoners regularly slept on the platforms of Underground stations. Many citizens were killed, and there was massive destruction in the southern and Eastern areas of England. Within months, the Britishers' determined resistance led the Nazi military to turn more of its attention to the USSR.

The British documentary cinema contributed to the united front against the Nazi attack. Some films were made by units within the military services. The Army and the Royal Air Force coproduced *Desert Victory* (1943, Roy Boulting), a feature-length account of one of the turning points of the war, the North African campaign and defeat of the Germans at El Alamein. Dozens of camera operators exposed their film in the desert, often in the thick of battle. Stock footage, maps, and staged footage were also used, yielding a clear, dramatic account of the campaign.

As soon as the war began, the GPO Film Unit had become the Crown Film Unit, dedicated to making war-related films. Some members of the unit were documentarists who had worked under John Grierson—Harry Watt, for example, who directed *Target for Tonight* (1941), showing a typical bombing raid over Germany. Virtually all the action, from the establishment of the home base and personnel to the return of the planes, is staged; the opening emphasizes, however, that "each part is played by the actual man or woman who does the job." The action goes beyond simple exposition of information, drawing upon

Target for Tonight

14.21 An American soldier and a Scot, both members of the bombing team in *Target for Tonight*.

conventions of fictional war films. Details lend human interest, as when a pilot misplaces his helmet. Similarly, *Target for Tonight*'s bombing unit was a mixture of nationalities (**14.21**). Perhaps in part because of these "fictional" aspects, the film was enormously popular.

One important documentarist came to the fore during this period. Humphrey Jennings, an artist and a poet, had been acting, editing, and scripting for the GPO Film Unit since 1934. He had directed a significant film, *Spare Time* (1939), on Britain's leisure activities. Along with his close collaborator, editor Stewart McAllister, Jennings devised a style that lyrically evokes the lives of ordinary British citizens. The pair frequently cut together shots taken in different locales while the sound from one locale continues uninterrupted. The counterpoint invites the viewer to see the connections among events.

Jennings's approach proved suited to depicting the home front. Rather than celebrating the dramatic glories of combat, he concentrated on the quiet resilience of the British public. With Watt and Pat Jackson, Jennings made *The First Days* (1939), on London's preparations for the inevitable bombing. The title of *London Can Take It!* (1940, also codirected with Watt), on the Blitz, suggests the determined mood that Jennings captured in his wartime films.

Listen to Britain (1942, codirected with Stewart McAllister) makes bold use of sound. Using only music and sound effects, they moved freely among everyday routines continuing incongruously during the reminders of war. A scene inside the National Gallery, for example, shows a concert against a backdrop of empty frames whose paintings have been removed for safekeeping. The concert music continues over views outside the hall, including a girl sitting reading while a barrage balloon floats overhead. As the scene shifts to a factory, the music gives way to loud clanging as a tank is assembled. In other parts of the film, popular songs span a range of shots in different places.

In 1943, Jennings made a feature documentary, *Fires Were Started*, on the role of the National Fire Service in putting out blazes started by German incendiary bombs during the Blitz. The film was completely staged, using a small group of characters to lend human interest to the story. Jennings portrayed them fighting fires and relaxing off-duty—playing pool, drinking beer, listening to music. For the fire scenes, bombed-out buildings were set ablaze so that Jennings could prepare careful compositions and get enough footage to edit scenes in the style of a fiction film (**14.22**). Despite all this manipulation of events, actual firefighters from the Blitz played all roles, and the film was considered highly authentic (**Video 14.3**).

Just as Jennings had captured the home front during the war, he meditated on the approaching postwar era in *A Diary for Timothy* (1945). The narration, written by E. M. Forster, addresses a baby born on the fifth anniversary of Britain's entry into the war, attempting to tell him not simply what went on but why the war was fought (**14.23**). The film juxtaposes scenes of the young Timothy along

Fires Were Started

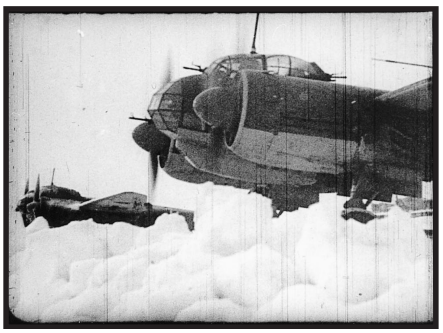
14.22 Staged action in *Fires Were Started* allowed Jennings to cut among details of the firefighting, such as this close shot of two men on a roof.

A Diary for Timothy

14.23 Children walk through the rubble of war as the narrator addresses Timothy: "When you joined us we'd been fighting for exactly five years. We've hated it, but we've kept on at it to save our skins. And also we had a feeling, deep down inside us, that we were fighting for you. For you and all the other babies" (*A Diary for Timothy*).

Deutsche Waffenschmieden

14.24 Walter Ruttmann put his flair for abstract images to work for the Nazis in *Deutsche Waffenschmieden* ("German Armaments," 1940), as in this shot of a factory worker inspecting the interior of a new gun barrel.



Deutsche Waffenschmieden

14.25 *Die Deutsche Wochenschau* depicted the hardships of German troops operating during the winter on the Russian–Ukrainian front, as in this shot of an airplane taking off amid heaps of snow and ice.

The Fight for Our Soviet Ukraine

14.26 In *The Fight for Our Soviet Ukraine*, Dovzhenko used his familiar flower motif, here juxtaposed with real destruction wrought by the Germans (compare with 12.8).

with scenes of wartime events, such as John Gielgud rehearsing *Hamlet* and police coping with a bomb. *A Diary for Timothy* attempted to convey the experiences of wartime to the young generation who had to build a new society.

Jennings made a few films after the war's end, but they failed to recapture the poignancy and optimism that had made him the foremost documentarist of the war. He died in an accident while scouting locations in 1950. The Crown Film Unit itself was abolished in 1952, though its alumni continued to work prominently in sponsored documentaries after the war.

Germany and the USSR

Overtly propagandistic films made up a relatively small proportion of German production during the Nazi era (See Glorifying War p. 240). Most theater programs included newsreels and documentary short films, however, and these contained Nazi propaganda. As in other countries, established filmmakers sometimes worked on these. For example, Walter Ruttmann, who had created experimental and documentary films in the 1920s, made a few shorts (**14.24**). In 1940, there were four newsreel series, and these were merged into one, the *Deutsche Wochenschau* ("German Weekly"), under Goebbels's control.

During the early years of the war, theater attendance rose because viewers wanted news from the front. Initially, newsreels portrayed the obstacles German soldiers encountered and overcame abroad (**14.25**); death and suffering were never shown. After the disastrous German defeat at Stalingrad in 1943, however, many spectators dismissed newsreels as mere window dressing. *Die Deutsche Wochenschau* became pure agitation in favor of total war, stressing the fearsomeness of the enemy.

Soviet documentaries took a different approach, stressing the suffering and destruction caused by the German invaders. As the war progressed, filmmakers could also inspire the public with genuinely heroic victories. The counterattack against the Fascist forces was shown vividly in *Defeat of the German Armies Near Moscow* (1942, Leonid Varlamov and Ilya Kopalin); seen in the United States as *Moscow Strikes Back*, it won an Academy Award. *Stalingrad* (1943, Varlamov) depicted the yearlong siege that proved to be the turning point in the war. Alexander Dovzhenko spent the war supervising documentary production, including the heartfelt *The Fight for Our Soviet Ukraine* (1943, Yulia Solntseva and Y. Avdeyenko; **14.26**).

After World War II, documentary films were less frequently seen in theaters. Techniques that had been invented for military cinematography, however, were to affect fiction filmmaking. Also, because documentaries had accustomed audiences to seeing real events depicted onscreen, a greater realism began to emerge in fictional films.

THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA

After the heyday of avant-garde cinema in the 1920s, the 1930s was a period of decline. The greater expense of sound production discouraged some filmmakers from experimentation. Some, like Dekeukeleire, moved toward documentary, often of a political nature. Official policy under the Nazi regime forbade "decadent" modernist styles in the arts, and most German filmmakers either went into exile (as when Hans Richter moved to the United States) or cooperated with the new regime (as with Walter Ruttmann).

Nevertheless, experiment did not disappear entirely. Avant-garde narratives and lyrical films, such as the city symphony, remained popular, especially for amateurs and independents. The influence of Surrealism lingered, and independent animation saw a resurgence. During the war, the United States and Canada became centers of alternative cinema, both for émigrés and for a new generation of filmmakers.

Experimental Narratives and Lyrical and Abstract Films

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, a small support system for amateur experimental filmmaking developed in the United States. Amateur filmmaking clubs proliferated, and the availability of 16 mm film stock made production cheaper. Art cinemas and ciné-clubs rented and showed experimental films. The Film and Photo Leagues distributed some experimental films, along with their leftist films, and the Amateur Cinema League provided another outlet. Some filmmakers rented out their own work through the mail.

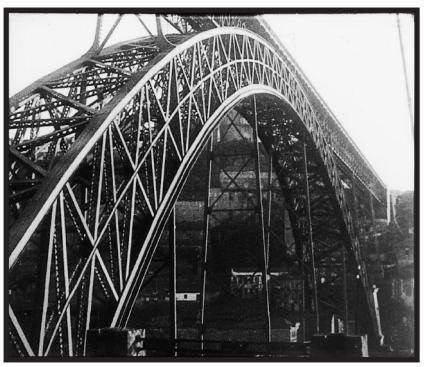
Experimental narrative films took many directions. In 1931, Austrian émigré Charles Vidor made *The Spy*, an adaptation of Ambrose Bierce's short story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." A man condemned to hang seems to escape, and the long chase culminates in the discovery that the escape was only a hallucination just before his death. Vidor went into the Hollywood industry, where he directed many feature films.

The city symphony was a favorite genre for those working on slim budgets. Aspiring New York photographer and filmmaker Jay Leyda created *A Bronx Morning* (1931). This poetic documentary weaves together simple motifs of actions caught in the streets as shops open and people come outdoors to socialize (**14.27**). The film's photography and editing won Leyda a place at the National Film School in the USSR, where he studied with Sergei Eisenstein and assisted him in the abortive *Bezhin Meadow* project (see Tales of Everyday Heroes p. 233). In Portugal, Manoel de Oliveira filmed *Douro, Faina Fluvial* ("Douro, River Work," 1931) at the mouth of the Douro River. Oliveira used the subject as a pretext to experiment with editing dynamic compositions (**14.28**). Much later Oliveira became a prolific director of features.

Herman Weinberg was a movie enthusiast who worked at an early art theater and wrote reviews. He made experimental short films, the only surviving example of which is *Autumn Fire* (1931). It combines lyrical documentary with a slim narrative thread, cutting between estranged lovers: a woman in rural settings and a man in the city (**14.29**). Weinberg went on to a career as a film critic and historian.

The lyrical film could also move into abstraction. One of the most daring films of the war period was the 16 mm *Geography of the Body* (1943), by Willard Maas and Marie Menken. Through extreme close-ups, a man's body becomes a sensuous, abstract landscape of hills and crevices (**14.30**).

A Bronx Morning


Douro, Faina Fluvial

14.27, *left* *A Bronx Morning* celebrates the charm of ordinary city life.

14.28, *right* *Douro, Faina Fluvial* returns repeatedly to shots of this dramatic bridge from many angles.

Autumn Fire

Geography of the Body

14.29, *left* Many shots in *Autumn Fire* show cityscapes and the countryside without the characters.

14.30, *right* Abstraction through framing in *Geography of the Body*.

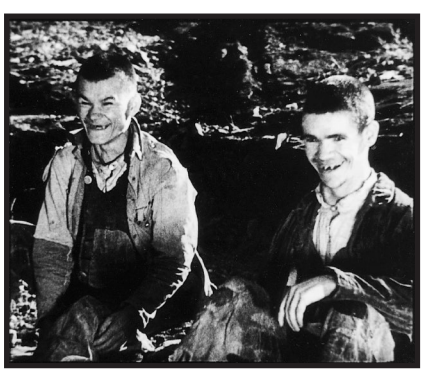
Surrealism

In 1930, French poet and artist Jean Cocteau shot his first film, *Blood of a Poet* (released in 1932). It was financed by a rich nobleman, the Vicomte de Noailles (who also backed Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali's *L' Age d'or* in 1930). *Blood of a Poet* established the dream and psychodrama genres as central to experimental cinema. Cocteau's film was intensely personal, drawing on motifs, such as a lyre and a muse figure, that appeared in his poetry and drawings. Developing on the dreamlike narrative of *Un Chien andalou* (see Surrealism p. 155), Cocteau made his hero an artist whose statue comes to life and passes through a mirror into a mysterious corridor. Behind its doors he sees bizarre scenes symbolically connected to his art (**14.31**).

After *Un Chien andalou* and *L' Age d'or*, Luis Buñuel became interested in making a documentary on Las Hurdes, an isolated, extremely primitive area in Spain. With a tiny budget, Buñuel made *Las Hurdes* (aka *Land without Bread*, 1932), emphasizing the region's stultifying poverty and disease. The catalogue of misery, presented in the dispassionate manner of a travelogue, created an eerie echo of the Surrealism of Buñuel's earlier work (**14.32**). Two decades later, he remarked, "I made *Las Hurdes* because I had a Surrealist vision and because I was interested in the problem of man. I saw reality in a different manner from the way I'd seen it before Surrealism."[3] The film was shot silent and shown in that form privately in 1933. The Spanish government banned it, however, on the grounds that it presented the country in a negative light. In 1937, it was finally released in France, with the music and narrator heard in modern prints.

Blood of a Poet

14.31 In *Blood of a Poet*, the artist sees a painting with a living head and arm.



Las Hurdes

14.32 *Las Hurdes* shows victims of genetic defects resulting from inbreeding, one of the chronic problems in the remote Spanish region.

After this, Buñuel worked as an editor and codirector on several Spanish films and then went to the United States early in the 1940s, where he did odd filmmaking jobs. His career as a director of feature films did not blossom until after the war.

Another, very different Surrealist completed one film during this era. Self-taught American artist Joseph Cornell had begun painting in the early 1930s, but he quickly became known chiefly for his evocative assemblages of found objects inside glass-sided display boxes. Mixing antique toys, maps, movie-magazine clippings, and other ephemeral items mostly scavenged from New York secondhand shops, these assemblages created an air of mystery and nostalgia. Although Cornell led an isolated life in Queens, he was fascinated by ballet, music, and cinema. He loved all types of films, from Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* to B movies, and he amassed a collection of 16 mm prints.

In 1936, he completed *Rose Hobart*, a compilation film that combines clips from scientific documentaries with reedited footage from an exotic Universal thriller, *East of Borneo* (1931). The fiction footage centers around *East of Borneo*'s lead actress, Rose Hobart. Cornell avoided giving more than a hint as to what the original plot, with its cheap jungle settings and sinister turbaned villain, might have involved. Instead, he concentrated on repetitions of gestures by the actress, edited together from different scenes; on abrupt mismatches; and especially on Hobart's reactions to items cut in from other films, which she seems to "see" through false eyeline matches. In one pair of shots, for example, she stares fascinatedly at a slow-motion view of a falling drop creating ripples in a pool **(Color Plates 14.1, 14.2)**. Cornell specified that his film be shown at silent speed (sixteen frames per second instead of the usual twenty-four) and through a purple filter; it was to be accompanied by Brazilian popular music. (Modern prints are tinted purple and have the proper music.)

Rose Hobart seems to have had a single screening in 1936, in a New York gallery program of old films treated as "Goofy Newsreels." Its poor reception dissuaded Cornell from showing it again for more than twenty years. During the 1930s, he continued to edit together films—mostly instructional shorts and home movies—in rough form. In the 1960s, he gave these to experimental filmmaker Larry Jordan, who completed some of them in

1970: *The Children's Jury* (attributed to Cornell), *Thimble Theater*, *Carousel–Animal Opera*, and *Jack's Dream*. Many other scraps of films remain unfinished, though Cornell continued his work in painting and assemblage pieces until his death in 1972.

Although relatively few Surrealist films were made during this era, this approach has had a powerful influence on the cinema ever since.

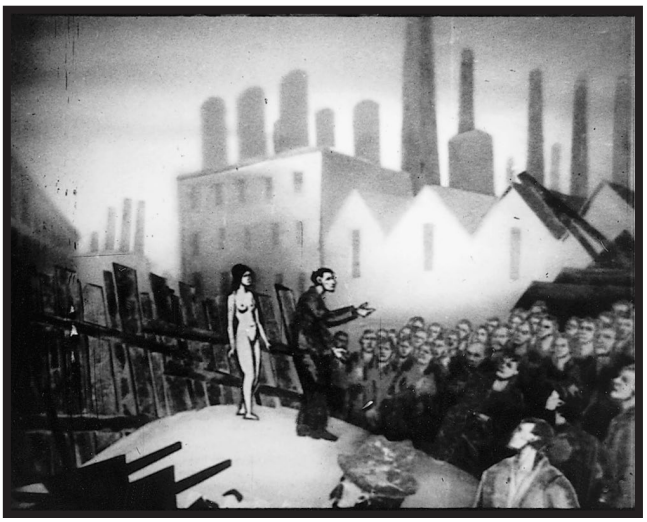
Animation

Some of the most significant experimental films of the 1930s employed animation techniques. This was partly because animated films required relatively little expenditure for sets, actors, and other necessities of live-action fiction filmmaking. Instead, with a camera, a few simple materials, and a great deal of patience, a single filmmaker or a small group could create richly imaginative works. Moreover, the stylization of animation made it suitable for advertising films, so some artists could support themselves by making both ads and more personal projects.

Most European animators continued to avoid traditional cel animation, perhaps because they associated it with Hollywood commercialism. Instead, they devised ingenious alternative means of creating motion frame by frame.

One of the most dedicated individualists of this period was Berthold Bartosch, a Czech artist who had made animated educational films in Vienna and Berlin. Assisting Lotte Reiniger on *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* gave him skill in shooting layers of translucent material to create land, sky, and sea effects (see 8.18). Commissioned to make a film based on a book of socialist woodcuts, Bartosch set up an animation stand in a Parisian art cinema. Using black-tinted glass, smears of soap, and other materials, over the next two years he created *The Idea* (1932). The film is an allegory of a worker's idea, personified as a nude woman, which he presents to his fellow workers but which is suppressed by corporate and social tyranny. Although the human figures are simple, stiff-jointed cut-outs, they move through atmospheric, subtly shaded cityscapes (**14.33**). Although Bartosch made a few ads over the next few decades, he never completed another major film.

Bartosch's film inspired two important animators to enter filmmaking. Russian-born Alexandre Alexeïeff had become a stage designer and book illustrator in Paris. After seeing *The Idea*, he tried to create the effect of engravings in motion pictures. Around 1934, he and his American partner Claire Parker (they married in 1941) invented the "pinboard." This device consisted of a frame around a stretched fabric in which were embedded half a million double-pointed pins. By pushing pins in different



The Idea

14.33 The hero of *The Idea* speaks to factory workers of his idea. The film was shot on a transparent table with light from below.

areas of the board to various heights and lighting them from the side, Alexeïeff and Parker created images in shades of gray. Moving some of the pins between each frame generated images textured in ways unlike those of other types of animation.

They quickly achieved a masterpiece, *Night on Bald Mountain* (1934), which they set to music by Modest Mussorgsky. Adopting the subject matter of Mussorgsky's work, Alexeïeff and Parker animated weird mutating images (**14.34**, **14.35**) that fly toward and away from the

Night on Bald Mountain

14.34, 14.35 Faces swirling in a void transmute into each other quickly and frighteningly in *A Night on Bald Mountain.*

camera with dizzying speed. The film was well received by critics and film-society audiences, but the pair depended on advertising films to make a living. These short ads, made by animating objects one frame at a time, are today considered classics. Alexeïeff and Parker made one other pinboard film during this period, a charming two-minute piece called *En passant* ("In Passing," 1943), to illustrate a French-Canadian folk song. It was produced by the National Film Board of Canada, after the two had fled the war in France and were living in the United States.

Abstract animation survived into the 1930s. In Germany, Oskar Fischinger linked moving shapes to music. Supporting his small company by doing advertising, Fischinger explored the possibilities of color in abstract animation. For example, *Circles* (1933) was made for an ad agency. The first color film made in Europe, the three-minute short delivered the brief message "Toliras reaches all [social] circles." The film consisted largely of complex patterns of circles rotating and pulsating to music **(Color Plate 14.3)**. By 1935, Fischinger was making cigarette and toothpaste commercials while completing *Composition in Blue*, in which three-dimensional objects cavort in an abstract blue space.

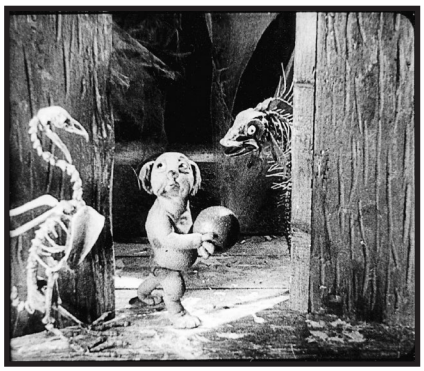
Fischinger soon left Nazi Germany and moved to Los Angeles. There he made a few animated films, including one short produced by MGM, *An Optical Poem* (1937). It was fairly well received as a novelty, but MGM's animation unit was not sympathetic to Fischinger's approach. He worked briefly at the Disney studio, and a few touches in the design of *Fantasia* and *Pinocchio* have been attributed to him. Still, most of his work in America was carried on with little support. Fischinger's most important film after his move to America, however, *Motion Painting No. 1* (1947), was funded by the Guggenheim Foundation. It consists of a single lengthy "shot," lasting roughly ten minutes, of the frame-by-frame brush strokes of a painting gone mad, building up to a whole composition, then another composition on top of the first, and so on. Six layers of transparent Plexiglas were successively laid on top of the first to achieve the effect—which Fischinger created in the camera for months on end without developing it to see if his technique was working. The result, timed to one of Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, is a dazzling exercise in continuous extension of lines of color. After the late 1940s, Fischinger could find no funding for filmmaking, and he turned to abstract painting.

Another major experimenter in abstract animation had begun work during the silent era. After *Tusalava* in 1929 (8.19), Len Lye tried to make similar films but found no backing. He began painting directly on film. Eventually Grierson's GPO Film Unit assisted Lye by financing or finding backers for his projects. Like Fischinger, he explored the possibilities of the new color processes that were becoming available in the mid-1930s. *Colour Box* (1935) animated jittery shapes to dance music. It was very popular and influenced the Disney animators who worked on *Fantasia*. In *Rainbow Dance* (1936), Lye took live-action images originally shot on black-and-white stock and manipulated the layers of the color film-stock emulsion to produce extraordinarily vibrant solid hues **(Color Plate 14.4)**. The film's only reference to the Post Office, its financial backer, came at the end with the slogan "A Post Office Savings Bank puts a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for you." Beginning in the late 1930s, when sponsorship declined, Lye directed imaginative documentaries for the GPO Film Unit, such as *When the Pie Was Opened* (1941), a short about making rationed food palatable. Lye made a few less ambitious films into the 1950s, but lacking financial support, he concentrated on kinetic sculptures.

In the United States, painter Mary Ellen Bute began making abstract animated films in the 1930s. Like Fischinger, she used familiar pieces of music and created moving shapes that synchronized to the changes in the tune. Her first films, such as *Synchrony No. 2* (1935) and *Parabola* (1937) were in black and white, but with *Escape* (1937), she introduced color **(Color Plate 14.5)**. An astute businesswoman, Bute managed to distribute her films directly to ordinary commercial cinemas that ran them as cartoons before the feature. She continued to make occasional shorts into the 1960s.

Several West Coast filmmakers worked in abstract animation. John and James Whitney's *Five Film Exercises* (completed in 1944) employed sound tracks consisting of synthesized music (well before the advent of electronic music). The painter Harry Smith explored the *batik* technique, which applied layers of paint to 35 mm film strips and controlled the pattern by means of tape or wax. In some of Smith's early abstractions, textured patches sketchily fill in the constantly changing shapes, while speckles of color overlay the design **(Color Plate 14.6)**.

While others were exploring the resources of pictorial animation, the world's foremost puppet animator, Ladislav Starevicz, who had begun in Russia (see The Beginnings of Film Animation p. 31) and emigrated to Paris after the Russian Revolution, continued his unique animation style. One of his longest works, *The Mascot* (1934), mixes live action and puppets in a story of a poor seamstress who crafts stuffed toys to support her sick daughter. Some of these come to life, and the protagonist, a toy dog, sets off in search of an orange for the child. Among his many



Deutsche Waffenschmieden

14.36 The animated skeletons of a bird and a fish try to take the hero's hard-won orange in *The Mascot*.

adventures, the dog encounters various grotesque figures at an inn (**14.36**). This scene displays Starevicz's expertise at moving many characters at once and in giving them mobile, expressive faces. Starevicz continued making occasional animated films in Paris until his death in 1965.

The economic and political turmoil of the years from 1930 to 1945 helped foster the documentary cinema, especially that made by leftist filmmakers. After World War II ended, the Cold War would create a less receptive atmosphere for such films, and leftists would often face an uphill struggle or outright censorship.

During the 1930s and early 1940s, experimental filmmakers had often worked in near isolation and with little financial support. Their situation improved somewhat, however, after 1945, with the spread of specialized art cinemas, the growth of international film festivals, and new grant support for filmmaking. We examine these trends in Chapter 21.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Vlada Petric, "Soviet Revolutionary Films in America (1926–1935)" (unpublished dissertation, New York University, 1973), p. 443.
2. Quoted in Paul Rotha, *Robert J. Flaherty: A Biography*, ed. Jay Ruby (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), p. 153.
3. Quoted in Francisco Aranda, *Luis Buñuel: A Critical Biography*, tr. and ed. David Robinson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976), pp. 90–91.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On Len Lye: "Len Lye, Renaissance Kiwi"

PART
FOUR

THE POSTWAR ERA: 1945–1960s

World War II created profound changes in many countries and in the balance of power internationally. Europe, Japan, the USSR, and the Far East suffered immense damage during the war, and rebuilding required will and money. The United States, however, had sustained no substantial damages within its own borders after the Pearl Harbor attack; and war spending had ended the Depression and generated a new prosperity that lasted into the postwar years. These circumstances allowed the United States to assist many countries in their reconstruction efforts.

Great political shifts took place whose aftereffects would play out during the rest of the century. The USSR took control of several Eastern European countries, dividing that continent with what Winston Churchill dubbed the Iron Curtain. The long struggle between the Communist countries within the Soviet sphere and the American–European alliance, organized as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, dominated international relations until the end of the 1980s. The conflict came to be known as the Cold War because it involved mutual deterrence through the stockpiling of nuclear weapons rather than actual combat.

Another change that would have great consequences involved Jewish refugees' search for a homeland following the horrors of the Holocaust. They moved into Palestine and, in 1948, declared the formation of the state of Israel. After a short war, in 1949 the partition of Jerusalem led to the divided territory that is still being contested.

During the decades following the war, especially the 1950s, many Asian and African countries shed their status as colonies. The Philippines declared its independence from the United States in 1946. The following year, India and Pakistan became separate dominions within the British Commonwealth. And between 1957 and 1962, more than two dozen sub-Saharan African countries gained their independence.

How to Marry a Millionaire

Elsewhere, the Chinese civil war resumed and resulted in the revolution of 1949, bringing to power the Communist regime that still rules the country. American occupation helped shape the recoveries of the defeated states of Germany and Japan. Such events could hardly fail to alter the international cinema scene in fundamental ways.

In many of the major film-producing countries, the years after the war saw attendance reach an all-time high. But eventually—soon in the United States, by the end of the 1950s in most European countries—patronage slackened disastrously. The United States pioneered new means of wooing audiences back with color, widescreen, and "bigger," more distinctive pictures, but the golden age of the vertically integrated studio system came to an end (Chapter 15).

The United States was not alone in postwar prosperity. Most European economies recovered quickly, allowing several national cinemas to rise to world prominence. Governments stepped up protection of domestic cinemas, arguing that film was a key representative of national culture. From Europe came a vastly influential film movement—Italian Neorealism—and a self-consciously artistic cinema that borrowed extensively from trends in modernism in the other arts (Chapters 16 and 17). Japanese cinema won international acclaim during the same years (Chapter 18).

The USSR and its Eastern European satellites continued to sustain state-controlled production, although countries experimented with degrees of decentralization. Filmmakers from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary achieved fame in the postwar era. Intermittent thaws in official Soviet policy allowed directors greater latitude. A similar rhythm of freedom and constraint was found in Mao's China (Chapter 18).

Elsewhere, Third World film industries were increasing in power. India led the way in output, while Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico were also major producers. All of these industries produced significant genres and directors (Chapter 18).

The new films of Europe, the Soviet bloc, Latin America, and Asia were made more visible through international film trade and accompanying institutions such as festivals and coproduction arrangements. The circulation of these films, along with their roots in artistic traditions, encouraged critics and filmgoers to treat cinema as the art of the director. This new frame of reference, which took the filmmaker as *auteur* ("author"), had profound effects on how films were made and consumed in the postwar era (Chapter 19).

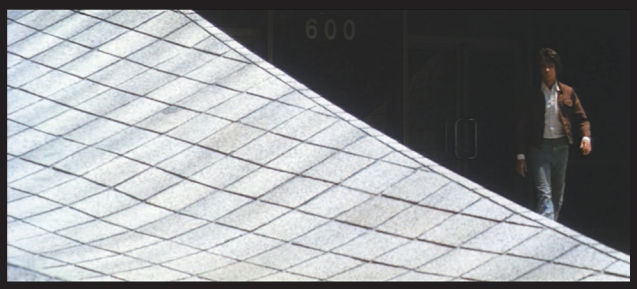
Near the end of the 1950s, a new generation of filmmakers surged to prominence all over the world. Energized by the *auteur* idea of personal expression, they created "new waves" and "young cinemas" that were formally experimental and thematically challenging (Chapter 20).

The art cinema and new waves operated within the commercial film industry, but marginal filmmaking practices continued to offer alternatives. Both documentary and experimental filmmakers sought to express their personal visions in their works, and they pioneered technologies and artistic strategies that influenced mainstream fictional cinema (Chapter 21).

As we saw in previous chapters, the cinema began as an international phenomenon, with films from the big early producing nations circulating freely. During the 1910s and 1920s, distinctive national styles and even movements within nations arose. The development of national cinemas was encouraged by the isolationism practiced by many countries during the Depression, by the rise of authoritarian states whose governments discouraged imports, and by the animosities of the war period.

In the half-century following World War II, however, we can see a move back to an international cinema. One factor was a tremendous growth in output. Smaller nations, including former colonies of the European powers, sought to create their own film industries. The growth of art cinema, sustained by critics and festivals, expanded the market for films of cultural interest. To compete with Hollywood, nations both large and small committed to coproductions.

In 1945, the world produced about 1,000 feature films. By 1970, it was producing 3,500. In these years, audiences had access to a wider range of films from outside their national boundaries. This expansion accelerated in later decades, as we'll see in Part Five and Part Six.



22.5 *The Parallax View*

22.6 *Nashville*

22.7 *The Godfather*

22.8 *One from the Heart*

22.9 *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*

22.10 *Taxi Driver*

23.3 *The Color of Pomegranates*

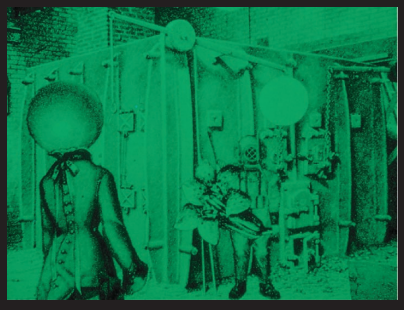
23.4 *Viva la muerte!*

23.5 *The Bitter Tears of Petra Van Kant*

24.1 *Field Diary*

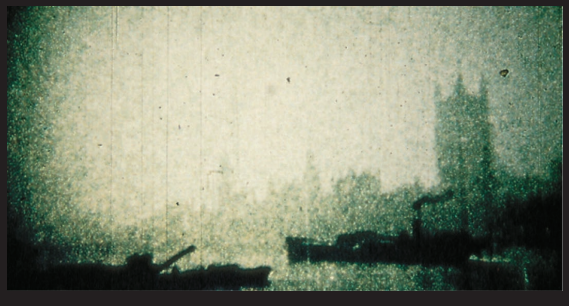
24.2 *The Thin Blue Line*

24.3 *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*



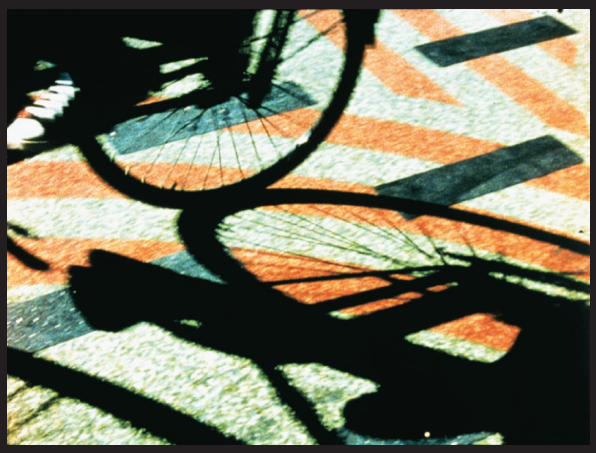
24.4 *Our Lady of the Spheres*

24.5 *Dimensions of Dialogue*



24.6 *Surfacing on the Thames*

24.7 *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G*

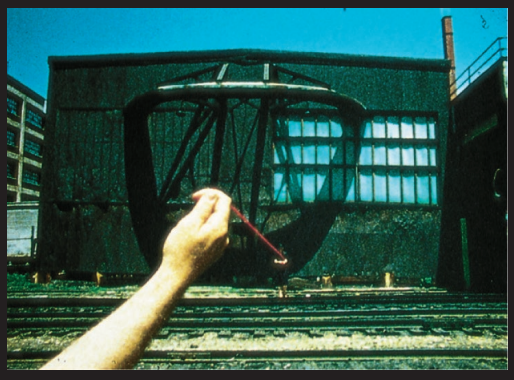


24.8 *Triste*

24.9 *American Falls*

24.10 *Line Describing a Cone*

24.11 *Pharaoh's Belt*



24.12 *One Way Boogie Woogie*

24.13 *Ryan*

24.14 *The New Ice Age*

24.15 *The Five Obstructions*

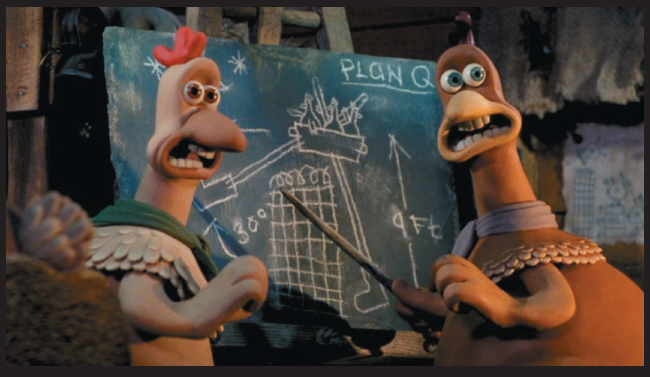
24.16 *Our Daily Bread*

24.17 *Leviathan*

24.18 *She Puppet*

24.19 *Goshogaoka*

24.20 *Cremaster*



25.1 *Chicken Run*

25.2 *Mona Lisa*

25.3 *Night of the Shooting Stars*

25.4 *Topsy-Turvy*

25.5 *Trainspotting*

25.6 *Bad Education*

25.7 *Landscape in the Mist*

25.8 *The Draughtsman's Contract*

25.9 *Distant Voices, Still Lives*

25.10 *Dogtooth*

25.11 *Transit*

25.12 *Toute une nuit*

25.13 *Beau Travail*

25.14 *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*

25.15 *Wings of Desire*

25.16 *Un Chambre en ville*

25.17 *Mauvais sang*

25.18 *Parsifal*

25.19 *Act of Spring*

25.20 *Caravaggio*

25.21 *Freak Orlando*

25.22 *Passion*

25.23 *Détective*

25.24 *The Element of Crime*

25.25 *Amélie*

25.26 *Songs from the Second Floor*

25.27 *Pont des arts*

25.28 *The Double Life of Véronique*

25.29 *Son of Saul*

25.30 *Stalker*

25.31 *The Legend of Suram Fortress*

25.32 *Taxi Blues*

25.33 *Mother and Son*

25.34 *Russian Ark*

26.1 *West Indies*

26.2 *Yeelen*

26.3 *Faat Kine*

26.4 *Son of Man*

26.5 *Timbuktu*

26.6 *Atlantics*

26.7 *Lebanon*

26.8 *Divine Intervention*

26.9 *Clash*

26.10 *Yol*

26.11 *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*

26.12 *And Life Goes On*

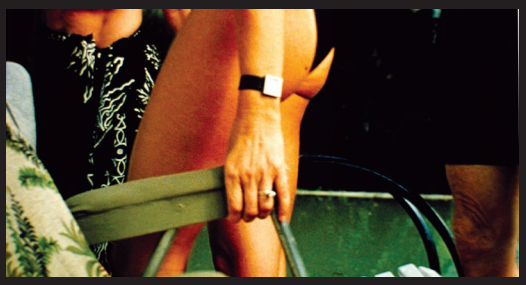
26.13 *The Apple*

26.14 *A Separation*

26.15 *City of God*

26.16 *Neighboring Sounds*

26.17 *Tangos: The Exile of Gardel*



26.18 *La ciénaga*

26.19 *Neruda*

26.20 *Frida*

26.21 *Pan's Labyrinth*

26.22 *Desierto*

26.23 *Cantata de Chile*

26.24 *Madrigal*

26.25 *Dil Se*

26.26 *Hum Aapke Hain Koun. . . !*

26.27 *Rang De Basanti*

26.28 *The Last Lear*

27.1 *Picnic at Hanging Rock*

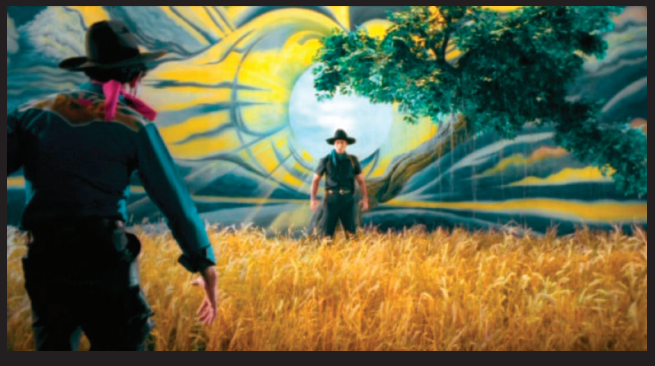
27.2 *Ten Canoes*

27.3 *Samson & Delilah*

27.4 *Angel at My Table*

27.5 *Whale Rider*

27.6 *What We Do in the Shadows*



27.7 *Tears of the Black Tiger*

The Lady in the Lake

CHAPTER 15

AMERICAN CINEMA IN THE POSTWAR ERA, 1945–1960

Sunset Blvd

The United States came out of World War II as a prosperous country. Workers had earned good money in military industries but had had little chance to spend it. Returning troops rejoined their spouses or married, ready to set up households and buy consumer goods. The birthrate, increasing during the war, skyrocketed, and the new generation was tagged the "baby boom."

The United States took on the role of a world superpower, helping its allies and former enemies. At the same time, the USSR struggled to assert its authority. President Harry S. Truman adopted a policy of "containment," trying to counter Soviet influence throughout the world. From 1950 to 1953, the United States fought alongside South Korean troops against the Communist North in an indecisive civil war. The United States and the USSR jockeyed for influence over nonaligned nations. The Cold War between the United States and the USSR would last for almost fifty years.

The sense of Communist encroachment around the world led to an era of political suspicion in the United States. During the late 1940s, intelligence agencies investigated individuals suspected of spying or subversion. A congressional committee delved into Communist infiltration of government and business, and under President Dwight Eisenhower (1953–1961) a Cold War policy held sway.

Yet, even as the government sought to present a united front against Communism, society seemed to fracture into distinct demographic segments. One powerful group was composed of teenagers, who had money to buy cars, records, clothes, and movie tickets. As teenage crime rose, the image of the "juvenile delinquent" emerged as well. Other social groups also gained prominence. The civil rights movement accelerated, primarily under the guidance of pacifist Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1954, the Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* took a step toward ending legal discrimination by mandating school desegregation.

POSTWAR CHANGES, 1946–1948

During the three years immediately after the war's end, Hollywood experienced pivotal high points and low points. Movie admissions had been increasing during the war, and 1946 set a box-office record: more than $1.6 billion in US and Canadian ticket sales. This figure, equivalent to more than $21 billion in 2020, remains unsurpassed. On average, every week 80 to 90 million Americans went to movies, out of a population of 140 million. (In 2019, the weekly average was 23 million out of about 330 million.)

Despite delirious box-office figures, Hollywood firms immediately confronted serious problems. In 1947, anti-Communist investigations by the US government targeted numerous studio personnel, and a 1948 Supreme Court decision changed the very structure of the industry.

The HUAC Hearings: The Cold War Reaches Hollywood

During the 1930s, many Hollywood intellectuals had been sympathetic to Soviet Communism; some had even joined the American Communist Party. Their left-wing leanings had been reinforced during World War II, when the Soviet Union was one of America's allies in the battle against the Axis. It was not illegal to join the Party, but members were suspected of siding with an enemy of the United States. For years the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had compiled information on Communists or sympathizers in the Hollywood community. By 1947, Congress was investigating Communist activities in the United States as part of the nationwide search by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) for purportedly subversive elements in government and private life.

In May 1947, several individuals—among them the actor Adolphe Menjou and the director Leo McCarey—agreed to name Hollywood people with Communist ties. In September, Republican J. Parnell Thomas chaired a HUAC hearing that set out to prove that the Screen Writers' Guild was dominated by Communists. Forty-three witnesses were subpoenaed.

The "friendly" witnesses, led off by Jack Warner of Warner Bros., labeled several screenwriters Communists. Gary Cooper, Ronald Reagan, Robert Taylor, and other stars expressed concern over leftist content in scripts. The "unfriendly" witnesses, most of them screenwriters, were seldom allowed to state their views. Most avoided denying that they had been Communists, stressing instead that the First Amendment guaranteed them freedom of expression in their work. Ten who testified were cited for contempt of Congress and briefly jailed. German leftist Bertolt Brecht, who had been working in Hollywood during the war and who had never belonged to any Communist party, gave a neutral response and immediately left for East Germany.

Vociferous public protest led Congress to suspend the hearings for four years. The ten unfriendly witnesses who had testified, however, found their careers collapsing as producers blacklisted them. Most of the "Hollywood Ten"—scriptwriters John Howard Lawson, Dalton Trumbo, Albert Maltz, Alvah Bessie, Samuel Ornitz, Herbert Biberman, Ring Lardner, Jr., and Lester Cole; director Edward Dmytryk; and producer Adrian Scott—were unable to work openly in the film industry.

The 1947 HUAC hearings found that the subject matter of Hollywood films had been tainted by Communist ideas—hence the emphasis on screenwriters. In 1951, the committee resumed its hearings, now aiming to expose all allegedly Communist personnel. Actors Sterling Hayden and Edward G. Robinson, directors Edward Dmytryk and Elia Kazan, and other former Communist sympathizers saved themselves by naming others. People who were named but refused to cooperate, such as actress Gale Sondergaard, found themselves on a new blacklist.

While maintaining the blacklist, Hollywood studios began producing anti-Communist films. These typically adapted current political news to the plot conventions of family melodramas and crime and espionage films. Screenwriters often substituted "Reds" for the gangsters, thugs, and Nazi spies seen earlier. This "anti-Communist" cycle didn't produce many hits, but *The Iron Curtain* (1948) and *Pickup on South Street* (1953) were among the finest postwar thrillers.

Some of the blacklisted filmmakers saved their careers by going abroad. Director Joseph Losey moved to England and Jules Dassin to France. Others worked under pseudonyms. In 1956, Dalton Trumbo wrote the script for *The Brave One*, which won him an Oscar—under a false name. In 1960, Otto Preminger declared that he would give Trumbo screen credit for the script of *Exodus*, and producer Kirk Douglas did the same for Trumbo's contribution to *Spartacus* (1960). From that point, the blacklist slowly crumbled. Only about one-tenth of its victims, however, were able to resume their film careers. The HUAC hearings had left a legacy of distrust and wasted talent. The resentment felt toward those who had given names during the hearings lingered for decades, resurfacing when Kazan was awarded a lifetime achievement Oscar in 2000.

The Paramount Decision

As we saw in Chapters 3 and 7, from 1912 on, the Hollywood studios had expanded to create an oligopoly. Working together, the firms controlled the industry. The largest were vertically integrated—making films, distributing

them, and showing them in their own theater chains. They benefited from this guaranteed outlet for their products and from a fairly predictable income. The smaller companies also benefited because their films could fill the free time in these theaters. The big firms could block-book whole packages of films to theaters they did not own, letting the bigger-budget, star-studded items carry the weaker pictures. During the sound era, the eight main Hollywood firms had continued to keep any large competitor from entering the film business.

Almost from the beginning, the US government had investigated this situation. In 1938, the Justice Department initiated a suit, *United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc. et al.*, usually called the "Paramount case." It accused the Big Five (Paramount, Warner Bros., Loew's/MGM, 20th Century-Fox, and RKO) and the Little Three (Universal, Columbia, and United Artists [UA]) of violating antitrust laws by colluding to monopolize the film business. The Big Five owned theater chains, block-booked films, and used other unfair means to keep independent films out of the big first-run houses. The Little Three owned no theaters, but they were accused of cooperating to exclude other firms from the market.

After a complex series of decisions, appeals, and legal maneuvers, in 1948 the US Supreme Court declared that the eight companies had been guilty of monopolistic practices. The Court ordered the Majors to divest themselves of their theater chains. It also directed the eight Hollywood firms to end block-booking and other practices that hampered independent exhibitors. The Hollywood companies filed a series of consent decrees that set up compromises with the Court. Over the next decade, all eight moved to comply with the Court's orders. The Big Five remained production-distribution companies but sold off their theater chains.

Some obvious benefits resulted from the increase in competition. With block-booking outlawed, exhibitors were free to fill part or all of their programs with independent films. Given this new access to exhibitors, independent companies multiplied. Stars and directors broke away to start their own companies. Between 1946 and 1956, the annual number of independent films more than doubled, to about 150. UA, which existed solely to distribute independent films, released fifty a year.

The production wing of the industry had been protected by the lack of competition in the pre-1948 era. The Paramount decision's ban on block-booking meant that a producer could no longer count on a few strong films to carry the rest. Every film had to appeal to exhibitors on its own. As a result, studios concentrated on fewer but more expensive films. With access to larger theaters, the small studios could compete better by making bigger-budget films. Among these were Universal's Technicolor biopic *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954, Anthony Mann) and Columbia's all-star *From Here to Eternity* (1953, Fred Zinnemann).

The eight main companies still dominated distribution. Independent producers could not afford to start large distribution circuits with offices in cities around the country. With little competition among distributors, almost all the independent firms had to release their films through the eight established companies. By the mid-1950s, nearly all these big firms had many independent productions on their release schedules.

In exhibition, independent theaters, which had previously depended on cheap films from small firms, had access to a wider range of films (though competition from television soon drove many out of business). At the same time, they also had to compete with each other for the smaller pool of films being released. Local theaters continued to cooperate among themselves, however, by keeping a geographic separation within a city and limiting the number of theaters in which the same film could play. As a result, theaters historically have not had to compete strongly for moviegoers' business—a fact reflected by today's roughly uniform admission prices among first-run theaters.

As a result, despite all these changes, the Majors and Minors continued to dominate distribution—the most powerful and lucrative wing of the industry—and to reap the bulk of box-office receipts.

THE DECLINE OF THE HOLLYWOOD STUDIO SYSTEM

Just as Hollywood was enjoying the high box-office receipts of 1946, its international market was also expanding. Late in the war, the studios turned the foreign department of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) into a new trade organization, the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA). Its task was to coordinate American exports, negotiate prices, and present a united front for Hollywood firms abroad. The government, seeing cinema as propaganda for American democracy, assisted film export through Commerce Department initiatives and diplomatic pressures.

Many countries passed protectionist laws, establishing quotas, production subsidies, and restrictions on exporting currency. The benefits were ambivalent at best. In 1947, Britain imposed a tax on imported films, and the MPEAA announced that the Majors would no longer offer new films to the United Kingdom. The boycott succeeded. After eight months, the British government

repealed the duty. Protectionist action often strengthened Hollywood's foreign domination. US firms could recover currency earned abroad by investing in foreign films and importing them to America, or they could spend "frozen funds" by shooting films abroad. These *runaway productions* also avoided the high cost of US labor.

While some countries struggled to rebuild their industries domestically, Hollywood came to rely more on exporting its product. Before the war, about one-third of US box-office income had come from abroad. By the mid-1960s the figure had risen to around half, a proportion that remained constant for decades.

After 1946, however, Hollywood's domestic fortunes began to sag. Attendance steadily shrank, from about 85 million viewers per week in 1946 to about 47 million in 1957. About 4,000 theaters closed during that decade. Output and profits fell. One of the Big Five, RKO, passed through several owners, including Howard Hughes, before ceasing production in 1957.

What ended the golden age of the studios, begun so auspiciously during the 1910s? After the war, the film industry faced a dramatic challenge. As people adopted new lifestyles, television and other leisure-time activities profoundly changed Americans' moviegoing habits.

Changing Lifestyles and Competing Entertainment

During the 1910s and 1920s, theaters had been built near mass-transportation lines in downtown areas easily accessible to local residents and commuters alike. After the war, many Americans had saved enough money for houses and cars. Suburban developments sprang up, and many people now drove to the city center. With small children, however, they hesitated to make the long trip into town for a film. Thus, changing demographics contributed to the late-1940s slump in moviegoing.

Initially, families stayed home and listened to the radio. Within a few years they were watching television. By the end of the 1950s, 90 percent of homes had television. The suburban lifestyle and broadcast entertainment, along with growth in other leisure activities (such as sports and recorded music), made the film industry's receipts plunge by 74 percent between 1947 and 1957.

When suburban couples did decide to go out to the movies, they tended to be more selective than moviegoers in the past. Rather than attending a local theater regularly, they would choose an "important" film—one based on a famous literary work or distinguished by its stars or displaying lavish production values. As the elimination of block-booking pushed producers to make higher-budget films, studios concentrated on projects that would cater to the more selective moviegoer.

Wider and More Colorful Movies The television image of the early 1950s was small, indistinct, and black-and-white. Film producers attempted to draw spectators out of their living rooms and back into theaters by changing the look and sound of their movies.

Color was an obvious way to differentiate movies from television, and, during the early 1950s, the proportion of Hollywood color films jumped from 20 to 50 percent. Many employed Technicolor, the elaborate three-strip, dye-transfer process perfected in the 1930s (see Technicolor p. 192). Technicolor's monopoly, however, led independent producers to complain that the studios got preferential access. A court agreed, and in 1950 Technicolor was obliged to offer its services more widely. In the same year, Eastman introduced a *monopack* (single-strip) color film. Eastman Color could be exposed in any camera and was easy to develop. The simplicity of Eastman's emulsion boosted the number of films shot in color. Technicolor ceased to be a camera stock in 1955, but the firm prepared release prints in its imbibition process until 1975.

Eastman Color lacked Technicolor's rich saturation, transparent shadows, and detailed textures. (Color Plates 10.2–10.8, 11.1, 15.5, and 17.2 are examples of Technicolor.) Still, the monopack stock was easier to use with the widescreen dimensions of the day. Unfortunately, Eastman Color images tended to fade, especially if the footage was hastily processed. By the early 1970s, many prints and negatives had turned a puttyish pink or a sickly crimson (**Color Plate 15.1**).

Nonetheless, at the time, color films provided an appeal that television could not match. So did bigger images. Between 1952 and 1955, many widescreen processes were introduced—or rather revived because all had been tinkered with in the early sound era.

Cinerama, a three-projector system that created a multipaneled image, premiered in 1952. *This Is Cinerama* was a travelogue in which the audience was treated to a roller-coaster ride, a plane flight through the Grand Canyon, and other thrills. The film played at a single New York theater for more than two years at unusually high admission prices, grossing nearly $5 million.

Less elaborate was CinemaScope, introduced by 20th Century-Fox and first displayed in *The Robe* (1953). 'Scope became one of the most popular widescreen systems because it utilized conventional 35 mm film and fairly simple optics. Most studios adopted 'Scope; only Paramount clung to its own system, VistaVision, introduced in *White Christmas* (1954). Later, there came processes involving 70 mm film (see See It on the Big Screen box).

After 1954, most Hollywood films were designed to be shown in some format wider than 1.37:1. Hollywood

SEE IT ON THE BIG SCREEN

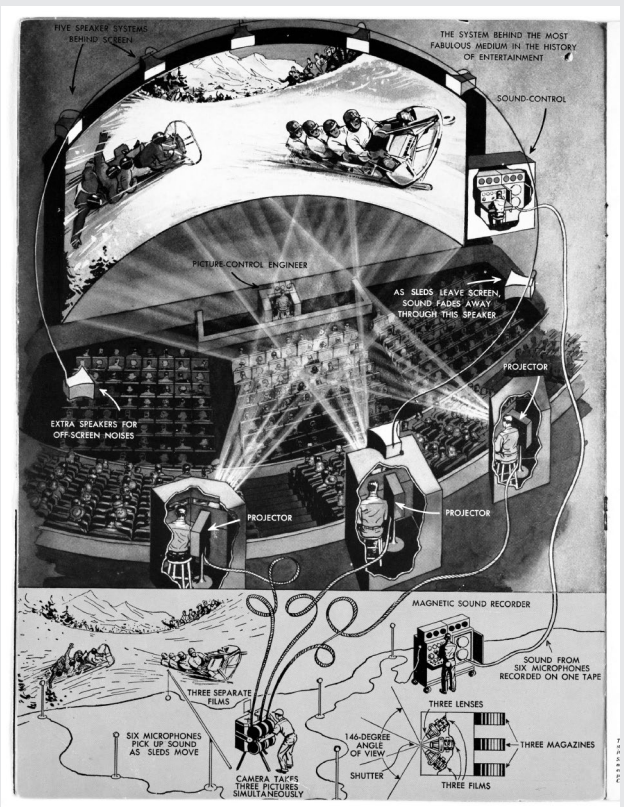
Before 1954, American films were almost always shot and shown in a trim rectangle at the proportions of 1.37:1. (The arrival of sound had led studios to modify the common silent ratio of 1.33:1.) The early 1950s' technical innovations drastically widened the image, creating new artistic problems and opportunities for filmmakers.

Several incompatible formats competed. Some utilized wider film gauges. Todd-AO, for example, replaced the usual 35 mm width with 65 mm; the finished film would measure 70 mm in width, allowing 5 mm for stereophonic sound tracks. Todd-AO was framed at a 2:1 aspect ratio. Such Todd-AO features as *Oklahoma!* (1955) were released on 70 mm prints (**15.1**). Paramount's VistaVision process still used 35 mm film but ran it horizontally through the camera. Because the frames were oriented horizontally rather than vertically across the film strip, they could be wider than 35 mm, and hence a greater negative area was exposed. When compressed and printed in the normal 35 mm format for release, this rendered a rich, dense image.

Cinerama achieved a wider picture by combining separate images. Three adjacent camera lenses exposed three strips of film simultaneously. Theaters showed the film on three mechanically interlocked projectors, yielding a sprawling 2.59:1 image on a curved 146-degree screen (**15.2**). Projectionists faced the constant risk of a reel's breaking and falling out of synchronization with the others. In addition, odd images resulted from the *blend lines* separating the three panels (**15.3**).

MAGNA CORPORATION/RODGERS HAMMERSTEIN PRODUCTIONS M/ Ronald Grant Archive/Alamy Stock Photo

15.1 The enormous "fish-eye" lens mounted on a camera used in filming *Oklahoma!* (1955). Cinematographer Robert Surtees, in the light suit and tie, stands in at the upper right. Producer Michael Todd is on the left, making home movies on the set with a small-gauge amateur camera.


FIVE SPEAKER SYSTEMS BEHIND SCREEN
THE SYSTEM BEHIND THE MOST FABULOUS MEDIUM IN THE HISTORY OF ENTERTAINMENT
SOUND-CONTROL
PICTURE-CONTROL ENGINEER
AS SLEDS LEAVE SCREEN, SOUND FADES AWAY THROUGH THIS SPEAKER
PROJECTOR
EXTRA SPEAKERS FOR OFF-SCREEN NOISES
PROJECTOR
PROJECTOR
MAGNETIC SOUND RECORDER
SOUND FROM SIX MICROPHONES RECORDED ON ONE TAPE
THREE SEPARATE FILMS
THREE LENSES
SIX MICROPHONES PICK UP SOUND AS SLEDS MOVE
146-DEGREE ANGLE OF VIEW
THREE MAGAZINES
SHUTTER
CAMERA TAKES THREE PICTURES SIMULTANEOUSLY
THREE FILMS

Science & Society Picture Library/Getty Images

15.2 The Cinerama process (in publicity material).

How the West Was Won

15.3 The curved Cinerama screen and its three panels made horizontal action bulge in perverse ways (*How the West Was Won,* 1963).

(continued)

SEE IT ON THE BIG SCREEN, continued

How to Marry a Millionaire

15.4 A publicity photograph displays not only Marilyn Monroe but also the "squeezing" and "unsqueezing" of the CinemaScope process (*How to Marry a Millionaire*, 1953).

The most popular widescreen system was CinemaScope, introduced by 20th Century-Fox in *The Robe* (1953). The CinemaScope camera was equipped with an anamorphic lens that took in a wide angle of view but squeezed it onto a strip of 35 mm film. The film could be shown by attaching a comparable lens to the projector, which would unsqueeze the picture to create normal-looking images (**15.4**). CinemaScope was initially standardized at 2.55:1 (for magnetic sound) or 2.35:1 (for optical sound). Compared with most other widescreen systems, Cinema Scope was inexpensive, technically simple, and fairly easy to use in shooting.

Some widescreen systems mixed these techniques. One process, displayed in the highly praised *Ben-Hur* (1959), combined anamorphic lenses with 65 mm film to create images in a 2.76:1 ratio. The process eventually came to be known as Ultra Panavision 70. The Panavision company's improvements in anamorphic optics, its lightweight 70 mm cameras, and its sophisticated laboratory techniques for reducing and blowing up different formats established it as the industry's leader in widescreen technology.

At first, Hollywood's creative personnel feared that the wide screen would immobilize the camera and lead to long takes. Some editors were afraid to cut quickly, worrying that viewers would not know where to look in a rapid series of wide compositions. A few early widescreen films, such as *The Robe*, *Oklahoma!*, and *How to Marry a Millionaire*, were rather theatrical, employing long-shot framings, frontal staging, and simple cutting.

Almost immediately, however, directors applied classical stylistic principles to widescreen composition. They exploited lighting and focus to emphasize the main figures, and they used depth to guide the spectator's eye gracefully across the frame (**15.5**). Orthodox editing returned, complete with shot/reverse shots and analytical cuts **(15.6, 15.7**). Alternatively, directors who had already

Carmen Jones

15.5 Directors soon learned to emphasize character reactions by framing the figures within well-bounded areas of the set. In *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), the "boxing" of the three men neatly fills out the CinemaScope format.

Bonjour Tristesse

15.6, 15.7 Shot/reverse shot in CinemaScope (*Bonjour Tristesse*, 1958). Typically framings like these decentered the actors, so that the cutting could create a balanced pattern.

exploited long takes and depth compositions packed the wide frame with significant detail.

By the mid-1960s, three sorts of widescreen systems dominated US production. Anamorphic 35 mm was established at a ratio of 2.35:1, while nonanamorphic 35 mm was typically shown at 1.85:1. Most 70 mm films were nonanamorphic and shown at a ratio of 2.2:1. Wider 70 mm movies were usually blow-ups from anamorphic 35 mm. These widescreen systems would remain the principal options available for Hollywood filmmaking during the decades that followed.

continued to shoot many films in the Academy sound ratio, but the projectionist had to mask the projector aperture to create a wide image in the theater. To compete with America, major foreign industries developed their own anamorphic widescreen systems including Sovscope (the USSR), Dyaliscope (France), Shawscope (Hong Kong), and TohoScope (Japan).

Wider images required bigger screens, brighter projection, and modifications in theater design. Producers also demanded magnetically reproduced stereophonic sound. During the early 1950s, Hollywood studios gradually converted from the optical sound recording introduced in the late 1920s to magnetic sound recording, using 1/4-inch audiotape or magnetically coated 35 mm film. These innovations permitted engineers to enhance widescreen presentations with multiple-channel sound. Instead of using a single boom microphone, some widescreen and 3D processes recorded with three microphones placed in front of the scene. These sounds would then be played back through the left, center, and right speakers positioned behind the screen in an effort to capture the "spread" produced by a sound's wavefront. CinemaScope used four channels while Cinerama had seven. Both technologies enveloped the audience with sounds coming from both the front and back of the auditorium.

Despite the greater immersion, most exhibitors balked at installing multichannel playback. The cost was high, and they believed that audiences paid more attention to the image

than to the sound track. In addition, although a films' music, dialogue, and sound effects were recorded on optical tracks, they could be played on standard monaural projectors.

Other innovations of the period were passing fads. Stereoscopic, or "3-D," films had been toyed with since the beginning of cinema, but the process resurfaced during the postwar recession years. *Bwana Devil* (1952) employed Natural Vision that required two strips of film to be shown one atop the other. The viewer wore polarized glasses that merged the two images into a sensation of depth. *Bwana Devil*'s success led all the major studios to undertake 3-D projects, notably *House of Wax*, *Kiss Me Kate* (both 1953), and *Dial M for Murder* (1954). By 1954, however, the craze was over. Even more short-lived was the effort to add odors to films. In 1958, AromoRama and Smell-O-Vision met with largely negative responses. After the standardization of digital production in the 2000s, 3-D was revived and became a major option for filmmaking.

Hollywood Adjusts to Television

Television threatened certain staple products of theaters' programs. Newsreels, for instance, were largely abandoned after television news proved more efficient and immediate. Animated films were edged out more slowly; for two decades after the war, film programs still included short cartoons, and the major animators created works of comic imagination and technical finesse. At MGM, Tex Avery's manic frenzy worked at full heat in *King-Size Canary* (1947; **Color Plate 15.2**) and *The Magical Maestro* (1952), while William Hanna and Joseph Barbera made the "Tom and Jerry" series perhaps the most bloodthirsty films coming out of Hollywood.

The Warner Bros. cartoon unit became, if anything, even more bizarrely inventive than it had been during the war. Bob Clampett's *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery* (1946) takes Daffy Duck at a breakneck pace through a surrealistic parody of film noir. Chuck Jones, who had begun as a head animator at Warners in the late 1930s, reached the top of his form, combining Wagnerian opera and Bugs Bunny illogic in *What's Opera, Doc?* (1957). He introduced the "Road Runner" series with *Fast and Furry-ous* (1949; **Color Plate 15.3**) and continued to direct its unpredictable variations on violence until his departure from the studio in 1961. During the 1950s, Jones also created several distinctive cartoons without the studio's stars. In *One Froggy Evening* (1955), a construction worker discovers a miraculous singing frog—which he attempts to exploit for money, until realizing that it sings only when alone with him (**Color Plate 15.4**).

Smaller than the units at MGM and Warners was United Productions of America (UPA), formed in 1948 and releasing through Columbia. UPA cartoons placed

Moonbird

15.8 Sketchy, distorted figures against a semiabstract background in *Moonbird*.

their recurring characters, Mr. Magoo and Gerald McBoing Boing, in distinctive modernistic settings. One of the founders of UPA, John Hubley, left to form his own company in 1952. Hubley and his wife, Faith, made such films as *Moonbird* (1960; **15.8**) in a decorative style that elaborated on the more spare UPA approach. UPA succumbed to the small screen in 1959, when it was sold and began making cartoons for television.

Walt Disney continued distributing his cartoons through RKO until 1953, when he formed his own distribution firm, Buena Vista. Although Disney continued to make short films, his most profitable works were his feature-length cartoons, introduced every few years and periodically rereleased. These were often sanitized adaptations of children's classics, although *Alice in Wonderland* (1951; **Color Plate 15.5**) displayed a slapstick verve missing from solemn undertakings such as *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). The studio revisited its tradition of combining live action and animation in the enormously successful *Mary Poppins* (1964).

By the mid-1960s, however, broadcast animation had captured the audience. The major studios virtually stopped producing animated shorts; MGM's last Tom and Jerry films (directed by Jones) were released in 1967, and Warner Bros. shut down its animation unit in 1969. Now Bugs, Daffy, Popeye, and their peers could be found only in reruns on Saturday morning television, not in the local theater.

Yet Hollywood moved rapidly to take advantage of its new competitor. For one thing, the networks needed enormous quantities of programs to fill their broadcast hours. In the early 1950s, about one-third of broadcast material consisted of old films, mostly B pictures from Monogram, Republic, and other Poverty Row studios. In 1955, the bigger studios started selling the TV rights to their own libraries.

In 1961, NBC launched the first weekly prime-time film series, "Saturday Night at the Movies," and, by 1968, there was a comparable film showcase on every weeknight. Rising fees for this programming made television sales a significant, predictable part of a film's income.

Moreover, the Hollywood studios started creating television shows. In 1949, Columbia converted its short-subject division, Screen Gems, to TV production. Among its products was the hit series *Father Knows Best* (1954–1962). When the networks moved from live broadcasting to filmed series in 1953, the demand for material intensified. Independent producers filled the need, as with *I Love Lucy*, created by the Desilu company (which took over the RKO studio when that firm ceased production in 1957). As film production declined at the big studios, they generated income by renting out their production facilities for independent filmmaking, for both theatrical release and television broadcast.

Walt Disney made perhaps the shrewdest use of the new medium. Disney adamantly refused to sell his cartoons to television because their carefully paced theatrical rereleases would yield profits for the indefinite future. In 1954, Disney contracted with ABC to produce an hour-long weekly show, *Disneyland*. The hit series ran for decades under several names. The show permitted Disney to publicize his theatrical films and new theme park (opened in 1955). Disney filled his program with shorts and excerpts from the studio library. And when one of his TV series struck a chord, as did the saga of Davy Crockett, a reedited version of the programs could be released as a profitable theatrical feature.

After the first few years, the Hollywood firms did not suffer from the competition with television. They simply expanded their activities to encompass both entertainment media. The film-based component of the industry, however, did decline. In the 1930s, the Majors released close to 500 features annually, but by the early 1960s the average was under 150. Box-office receipts continued to fall until 1963, when television had effectively saturated the American market. After that, attendance rose a bit and leveled off at around a billion admissions per year. Still, it has never come close to the levels of the pre-TV era.

Art Cinemas and Drive-Ins

Before the 1950s, most studio productions were intended for a family audience. Responding to the decline in theater attendance, many producers now frequently targeted films specifically at adults, children, or teenagers.

Aiming at children and adolescents, Disney moved into live-action features with adventure classics (*Treasure Island*, 1950), adaptations of juvenile literature (*Old Yeller*, 1957), and fantasy comedies (*The Absent-Minded Professor*, 1961). These low-cost films were routinely among each year's top grossers.

In the mid-1950s, the *teenpics* market opened in earnest, as viewers born during World War II began making their consumer strength felt at the box office. Rock-and-roll musicals, juvenile-delinquency films, and science-fiction and horror items attracted the teenage market. The major studios reacted with *clean-teen* comedies and romances featuring Pat Boone and a succession of Tammys and Gidgets. America's burgeoning youth culture, centered on dating, pop music, souped-up cars, and fast food, was soon exported around the world, shaping cinema in other countries.

The demographic-target tactic also created new kinds of exhibition. Although a few small theaters had offered foreign films since the 1920s, the art-house audience became more significant after World War II. With thousands of veterans going to college through the GI Bill, an older, educated audience emerged, many of whose members had traveled in Europe and Asia during the war and for whom foreign films held some appeal.

The film industry had economic reasons for importing more films. American films were flooding into countries whose production was debilitated, but many governments restricted the amount of funds that could be taken out. American companies had to invest their profits within those countries or buy goods there for export. Buying the American distribution rights to foreign films proved one way of transferring profits legally.

Moreover, with US production in decline, importing art films provided smaller theaters with low-cost product. Some independent exhibitors, faced with sagging attendance, found that booking foreign films could attract the local elite. Such films were not broadcast on television, so these exhibitors suffered no competition.

As of 1950, there were fewer than 100 art theaters in the entire country, but, by the mid-1960s, there were more than 600, most in cities or college towns. They were usually small, independent houses decorated in a modern style calculated to appeal to an educated clientele. The lobbies often displayed paintings, and the refreshment counters were more likely to offer coffee and cake than soda and popcorn.

Some offbeat US independent fare received distribution in art theaters, but the staple programming came from Europe. The flow of imports began directly after the war ended, with Roberto Rossellini's *Open City*, released in 1946, earning high grosses and helping to create an interest in films made abroad. Carl Dreyer's *Day of Wrath*, Marcel Carné's *Children of Paradise*, and Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* were among many that accustomed American audiences to reading subtitles. English films consistently

dominated the import market. Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* broke out of the art-cinema circuit to become one of the top-grossing films of 1948. During the 1950s, some imports from countries with looser censorship turned sex into an attraction at art houses. French director Roger Vadim's *And God Created Woman* (1957) made Brigitte Bardot a star in America. Quite often the "sophistication" of imported films owed more to daring subject matter than to complex form or profound themes.

Drive-in theaters presented another attractive alternative for exhibitors during a period of falling box-office receipts. The owner did not need an expensive building—only a screen, a speaker for each parking space, a concession stand, and a ticket booth. Farmland was relatively cheap, and the drive-in's typical location, just outside of town, made it handy for the new suburban population. Now people who seldom frequented the downtown theaters could easily go to the movies. Admission was also affordable, as films playing in drive-ins were often far past their first runs.

The first drive-in dated from 1933, but there were only two dozen in the whole country in 1945. By 1956, more than 4,000 "ozoners" were operating—about equal to the number of "hardtop" theaters that closed in the postwar era. During the early 1950s, about one-quarter of box-office income came from drive-ins.

Drive-ins were not ideal venues for viewing. The tinny speakers yielded atrocious sound, rain could blur the picture, and cold weather required exhibitors to close down for the season or provide (feeble) heaters. But drive-ins proved successful with their target audiences. Despite the cheap tickets, most showed two or even three features. Parents could bring their children and avoid the cost of a babysitter. Because people could circulate during the film without clambering over their neighbors, concession stands did better business in drive-ins than in other theaters. Some drive-ins specialized in teenpics, and the prospect of sharing a dark front seat for several hours brought many adolescent couples to the local "passion pit."

Challenges to Censorship

Exploitation movies, imported films, and independent producers' "adult" themes and subjects inevitably posed problems. Films were failing to win approval from local censorship boards. A turning point in regulation came when an Italian film, Roberto Rossellini's *The Miracle* (1948), was denied an exhibition permit by the New York Board of Censors on the grounds that it was blasphemous. It told the story of a peasant woman who is convinced that her unborn child is the son of God. In 1952, the Supreme Court declared that films were covered by the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. Later court decisions made it clear that films could be censored only on grounds of obscenity, and even that was narrowly and vaguely defined. Many local censorship boards were dissolved, and few films were banned.

The industry's own self-censorship mechanism, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA, formerly the MPPDA), also faced problems enforcing its Production Code (see The Hays Code: Self-Censorship in Hollywood p. 188). The MPAA's main weapon for obliging distributors to submit their films for its approval was its rule that no theater belonging to the association would show a movie without a certificate of approval. Once the five Majors divested themselves of their theater chains, however, exhibitors were free to show unapproved films—often independent ones that had riskier subject matter than the MPAA allowed.

Partly in response to this increased competition, the big producer-distributors also began transgressing the Code's boundaries. One way of competing with television, which had extremely strict censorship, was to make films with more daring subject matter. As a result, producers and distributors pushed the Code further and further. When the MPAA refused to approve the mildly risqué *The Moon Is Blue* (1953, Otto Preminger), UA released it nevertheless. Preminger was persistent in flaunting the Code, and UA also distributed his film about drug addiction, *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955), without an MPAA certificate.

Gradually the MPAA softened its position and began awarding seals to films that seemingly violated the original 1934 Code. Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (1959) put Marilyn Monroe in a nearly transparent dress and dealt lightheartedly with transvestism and implied bisexuality (see **15.30**). It got a seal from the MPAA, even though the Catholic Legion of Decency nearly gave it a "condemned" rating. *Lolita* (Stanley Kubrick), which centered on a man's seduction of an underage girl, could never have been released in the 1930s or 1940s, but it received a seal in 1962. The Code was obviously outdated, and the stage was set for a switch to a system of rating films, instituted by the MPAA in the mid-1960s (see Chapter 22).

THE NEW POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL FILM AND THE REVIVAL OF THE ROADSHOW

Before 1948, a studio planned its production schedule for an entire year, always including several big films that would lure exhibitors to book the whole season's output.

After the Paramount decision, each individual film became more important. No movie could win its way simply by being slipped into a bundle of better films. Even a studio's cheapest, least prestigious film had to have its own attractions.

In the postwar years, Americans were prosperous and had many types of entertainment to choose from. In 1943, 26 cents of every entertainment dollar was spent on going to movies. By 1955, that figure was down to 11 cents, and it continued to fall until leveling off at about 8 cents in the 1970s. People resisted buying tickets unless a movie was something special, an event. Successful big-budget movies played theaters for longer runs, so fewer movies were needed overall.

As a result, there came to be less distinction between A films and B films. With the Depression over and the high attendance in the immediate postwar years, theaters no longer had to offer a double feature. B films, which had usually filled the second half of programs in the 1930s, became insignificant to the big producers. Double features continued to a lesser degree into the 1960s, but the theaters showing them usually relied on two second-run A pictures or coupled an A picture with a cheaper one, often picked up from British or independent US producers. In general, the role of making cheaper films was taken over by independent producers who aimed their films at specific segments of the audience.

To set the biggest productions apart, in the 1950s distributors revived a tactic used occasionally for special films since the silent era: *roadshowing*. *The Birth of a Nation* had been a roadshow release in 1915. A roadshow film played in only one theater per market, with just two or three screenings each day. Higher-priced tickets for reserved seats, available in advance, compensated for the reduction in showings.

Roadshow attractions tended to highlight widescreen technology (see See It on the Big Screen p. 289). Starting in 1952, Cinerama films, with their triple images, could play only in the small number of theaters built or remodeled for that purpose. Todd-AO films, with a 70 mm width, were screened in about sixty specially equipped theaters, all on a roadshow basis. Only after a considerable delay were 35 mm prints made available to other exhibitors. 20th Century-Fox also used roadshow distribution for some of its CinemaScope films.

Many roadshow releases were highly successful. Michael Todd, originally a New York theater producer, formed Todd-AO with Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein as business partners. They agreed to have their hit Broadway musical *Oklahoma!* shot in the new process; the film ran for more than a year in some venues. Roadshow pictures continued to be based on big Broadway shows and best-sellers. *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956) had an all-star cast and won several Oscars. During their limited initial releases, such films built up reputations as must-see events, and in later runs they played in many theaters. Roadshows remained a regular release method through the 1960s (see Chapter 22).

THE RISE OF THE INDEPENDENTS

The increasing importance of individual films went hand in hand with the growth of independent production, a trend that accelerated in the 1950s. An independent firm, by definition, is not vertically integrated; it is not owned by a distribution company and does not itself own a distribution company. An independent producer could be large and prestigious, such as David O. Selznick, or small and marginal, such as the producers of exploitation films, which we shall discuss shortly.

Mainstream Independents: Agents, Star Power, and the Package

Many independent producers were entrepreneurs, and some stars and directors had an incentive to turn independent. In the 1930s and early 1940s, studios often signed stars to seven-year contracts, and the producers could put them into as many films as they wanted—whether the stars approved of the projects or not. Similarly, directors were often at odds with their studios over creative matters and longed for freedom.

A radical change that would transform the way films were made began with the help of a small music agency started back in 1924, the Music Corporation of America (MCA). In 1936, MCA hired a dynamic publicist named Lew Wasserman. A movie lover, Wasserman determined to expand into representing film stars. His first client was the temperamental Bette Davis, who was dissatisfied with her situation at Warner Bros. Despite having won two Oscars during the 1930s, she felt the studio often cast her in poor roles. In 1942, Wasserman turned Davis into her own company, B. D. Inc. Thereafter she got her usual acting fee plus 35 percent of the profits from each Warner Bros. film she was in.

In earlier years there had been a few stars powerful enough to demand percentages of their films' grosses or profits, including Mary Pickford in the 1910s and Mae West and the Marx Brothers in the 1930s. Wasserman,

however, made this practice relatively common. He negotiated a similar deal between Errol Flynn and Warner Bros. in 1947. In fact, the big studios wanted to reduce overhead costs by cutting back on the number of actors they had under long-term contract; yet, they had not planned on doing so by giving actors huge fees on each picture. Other agents adopted this approach, as when the William Morris firm arranged for Rita Hayworth to receive 25 percent of her pictures' profits as well as script approval.

Wasserman achieved his most spectacular deal for James Stewart. As a result of a disagreement with MGM, Stewart had found little work in Hollywood after the war. He returned to Broadway theater and at the end of the 1940s scored a success in the comic fantasy *Harvey*. In 1950, Wasserman sold Universal on the idea of a screen adaptation of the play, with Stewart getting a fee plus a percentage. Under the terms of the contract, Universal also had to produce an Anthony Mann Western, *Winchester 73* (1950), with Stewart getting no fee but half the profits. *Winchester 73* was a surprise hit and made Stewart a much wealthier man.

In negotiating this deal, Wasserman also was selling the adaptation rights to the play of *Harvey*. By combining star and project in one deal, he was "packaging" them. The *package-unit approach* to production, with a producer or agent assembling the script and the talent, became common for A pictures. For example, in 1958, *The Big Country* was made using a bevy of Wasserman's clients: director William Wyler and stars Gregory Peck, Charlton Heston, Carroll Baker, and Charles Bickford.

Wasserman worked similar magic for Alfred Hitchcock, who signed MCA as his agency in the early 1950s. Wasserman moved him from Warner Bros. to Paramount at a large pay raise. Because MCA also produced television programs, Wasserman persuaded Hitchcock to host and occasionally direct episodes for *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. He became the most recognizable director in the world. Wasserman also negotiated 10 percent of the gross of *North by Northwest* (1959) for Hitchcock. Because studio executives were reluctant to make the lurid black-and-white thriller *Psycho* (1960), Wasserman arranged for Hitchcock to help Paramount finance the film in exchange for 60 percent of the profits. The film's phenomenal success made Hitchcock the richest director in Hollywood.

As a result of many such deals, some agents came to have more power than the moguls who founded and headed the big studios. Indeed, MCA brought Universal from its shaky state in the early 1950s to prosperity by decade's end. From 1959 to 1962, Wasserman masterminded MCA's acquisition of Universal, giving up the talent-agency wing of the business to run the studio.

The 1940s saw other directors and stars strike out on their own. After twelve years under contract to Warner Bros., Humphrey Bogart formed the Santana company to produce his own films. It lasted six years and made five films. Few small production firms, however, could weather a single box-office flop. Santana's last film, an eccentric spoof of film noir called *Beat the Devil* (1954), failed at the box office, and its subsequent cult status could not save Bogart's company.

John Ford's conflict with Darryl F. Zanuck over his Western masterpiece, *My Darling Clementine* (1946), led him to revive Argosy Pictures, the small production firm he had formed in the late 1930s to make *Stagecoach* (1939) and *The Long Voyage Home* (1940). In its new incarnation, Argosy produced nine of Ford's next eleven films.

Argosy's fortunes reflect the difficulties of independent production. The independents had to market their films through the Majors' distribution units, which had survived the Paramount decision. Argosy's films were distributed through RKO, then MGM, then RKO again. Ford as producer went deep in debt to make each film. As the money came in, the banks took their share first, the distributor second, and Argosy third. Ford's company was in serious trouble when in 1952 he made his nostalgic Technicolor story of Ireland, *The Quiet Man*. Only the small B-film producer Republic would distribute the film, which became a commercial hit. Ford's next film, the old-fashioned comedy *The Sun Shines Bright*, killed Argosy Pictures.

Other directors managed independent production with greater long-term success. Having worked extensively for 20th Century-Fox, Otto Preminger began independent production with *The Moon Is Blue* (1953). Through Columbia and UA, he released such adaptations of best-sellers as *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), *Exodus* (1960), and *Advise and Consent* (1962). Stars also managed occasionally to muster sufficient budgets for epic productions. Kirk Douglas produced the Roman Empire–era epic *Spartacus* in 1960, using Technicolor and Super Technirama 70.

Former moguls could become independent producers. Hal Wallis, production chief at Warner Bros., left to produce on his own. He struck a long-term deal with Paramount for the films of the most popular team of the 1950s, comic Jerry Lewis and singer Dean Martin.

Independent production proved to have its own frustrations. Ultimately, independents had to deal with the

main distribution firms, which often insisted on some creative input into individual films—a situation that sometimes differed little from conditions under the big studios of the 1930s. In later decades, as powerful agents packaged stars and big-name directors into major projects, greater freedom was occasionally achieved (see Chapter 22).

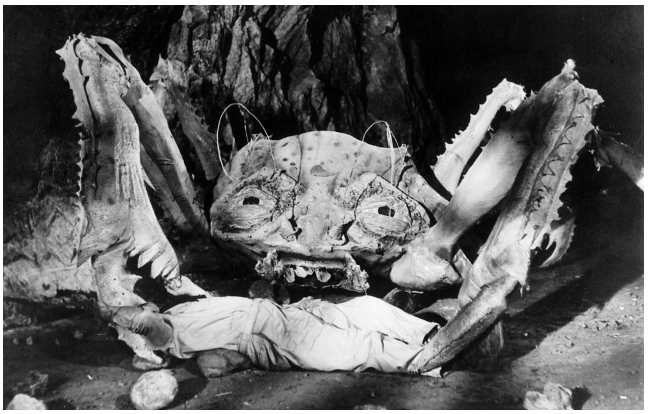
Exploitation

Throughout the 1950s, the theaters still showing double features needed inexpensive, attention-getting fare. The demand was met by independent companies that produced cheap pictures. Having no major stars or creative personnel, these films cashed in on topical or sensational subjects that could be "exploited." *Exploitation films* had existed since World War I, but in the 1950s they gained new prominence. Exhibitors, now free to rent from any source, found that low-priced products could often yield a nicer profit than could big studio releases, which obliged them to remit high percentages of box-office revenues.

Exploitation companies cranked out cheap horror, science-fiction, and erotic films. Among the most bizarre were those written and directed by Edward D. Wood. *Glen or Glenda* (aka *I Changed My Sex*, 1953) was a "documentary" about transvestism narrated by Bela Lugosi. *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959), a science-fiction invasion story, was filmed in an apartment, with the kitchen serving as an airplane cockpit. Lugosi died during the filming and was doubled by a chiropractor who scarcely resembled him. Ignored or mocked on their release, Wood's films became cult classics in later decades.

American International Pictures (AIP) made more upscale exploitation items. AIP films aimed at what company head Sam Arkoff called "the gum-chewing, hamburger-munching adolescent dying to get out of the house on a Friday or Saturday night."[1] Shot in a week or two with a young cast and crew, AIP films exploited high schoolers' taste for horror (*I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*, 1957), crime (*Hot Rod Girl*, 1956), science fiction (*It Conquered the World*, 1956), and music (*Shake, Rattle & Rock!*, 1956). As AIP grew, it invested in bigger productions, such as beach musicals (*Muscle Beach Party*, 1964) and an Edgar Allan Poe horror cycle beginning with *House of Usher* (1960).

Roger Corman produced his first exploitation film (*The Monster from the Ocean Floor*, 1954) at a cost of $12,000. Soon Corman was directing five to eight films a year, mostly for AIP. They had a rapid pace, tongue-in-cheek humor, and dime-store special effects, including monsters apparently assembled out of plumbers' scrap and refrigerator leftovers (**15.9**). According to Corman, he shot three black comedies—*A Bucket of Blood*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Creature from the Haunted Sea* (all 1960)—over a two-week period for less than $100,000, at a time when one ordinary studio picture cost $1 million. Corman's Poe cycle won him some critical praise for its imaginative lighting and color, but the films still appealed to teenagers through the scenery-chewing performances of Vincent Price.


Attack of the Crab Monsters

15.9 A publicity still from Corman's *Attack of the Crab Monsters* (1956).

Obliged to work on shoestring budgets, AIP and other exploitation companies pioneered efficient marketing techniques. AIP would often conceive a film's title, poster design, and advertising campaign; test it on audiences and exhibitors; and only then begin writing a script. Although the major distributors adhered to the system of releasing films selectively for their first run, independent companies often practiced *saturation booking* (opening a film simultaneously in many theaters). The independents advertised on television, released films in the summer (previously thought to be a slow season), and turned drive-ins into first-run venues. All these innovations were eventually taken up by the Majors.

The exploitation market embraced many genres. William Castle followed the AIP formula for teen horror, but he added extra gimmicks, such as skeletons that shot out of the theater walls and danced above the audience (*The House on Haunted Hill*, 1958), as well as electrically wired seats that jolted the viewers (*The Tingler*, 1959).

Independents on the Fringe

Occasionally, independent production took a political stance. Herbert Biberman's *Salt of the Earth* (1954)

followed the tradition of 1930s left-wing cinema in its depiction of a miners' strike in New Mexico. Several blacklisted film workers participated, including some of the Hollywood Ten. Most of the parts were played by miners and unionists. The hostile atmosphere of the anti-Red years hampered the production, and the projectionists' union blocked its theatrical exhibition.

The "New York School" of independent directors was less politically radical. Morris Engel shot *The Little Fugitive* (1953), about a boy's wandering through Coney Island, with a handheld camera and postdubbed sound. Engel's later independent features, *Lovers and Lollipops* (1955) and *Weddings and Babies* (1958), used a lightweight 35 mm camera and on-the-spot sound recording in a manner anticipating Direct Cinema documentary (See Direct Cinema). Lionel Rogosin blended drama and documentary realism in *On the Bowery* (1956) and *Come Back, Africa* (1958).

CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKING: A CONTINUING TRADITION

Even as the industrial base of Hollywood filmmaking began to crack, the classical style remained a powerful model for storytelling. In addition, it underwent some important modifications during the postwar decades.

Complexity and Realism in Storytelling

In the early 1940s, Hollywood began exploring unusual narrative options. *Citizen Kane* (1941), with its complex flashback structure, was the most visible example, but *Double Indemnity* (1944) and other early film noirs proved influential too. At the same time, writers and directors experimented with subjective narrative techniques, as in *Kitty Foyle* (1940) and *Lydia* (1941).

Many of these devices had been used in the silent era, but Hollywood largely abandoned them when sound came in. 1930s filmmakers favored linear, objective presentation, enhanced by music and rapid-fire dialogue. In the 1940s, however, Hollywood returned to time-shifting plots and probes of characters' minds, now enhanced by sophisticated use of sound. Voice-overs could accompany flashbacks and tap into characters' thoughts, while distorted music and sound effects emphasized their dreams and hallucinations.

Postwar filmmakers intensified these efforts. Flashbacks, treated as character memory or confession, took on a new complexity. In *A Letter to Three Wives* (1949), each protagonist is forced to recall crucial incidents in her marriage. The melodrama *The Locket* (1946), in which a husband tries to find out about his wife's past, contains a flashback-within-a-flashback-within-a-flashback. There were lying flashbacks, as in *Crossfire* (1947), and flashbacks that replayed key incidents with new information, as in *Mildred Pierce* (1945) and *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954).

More filmmakers tried to put audiences in the characters' place. The first several scenes of *Dark Passage* (1947) are presented through the eyes of the protagonist. In *Hangover Square* (1947), dissonant music suggests the demented imagination of a serial killer, while *Possessed* (1947) conveys a woman's growing madness through exaggerated noises. For most of *The Lady in the Lake* (1947), the image presents detective Philip Marlowe's optical viewpoint on the action. Characters appear to punch or kiss the camera, and during his investigation Marlowe becomes visible only when we glimpse him in a mirror (**15.10**). Such films rely on techniques of camerawork and mise-en-scène pioneered by French Impressionism and German Expressionism.

Most of these innovations did not threaten the premises of classical narrative filmmaking. Scrambled time schemes and haunted imaginations usually became straightened out and anchored in a coherent story world. And because most of these experiments involved mysteries, the plots relied on conventions from the detective genre. Yet a few films, such as *The Chase* (1946) and *The Guilt of Janet Ames* (1947), took flashbacks and subjectivity so far that they became difficult to follow.

While some directors were exploring complex storytelling tactics, others were embracing an unprecedented realism of setting, lighting, and narration. The trend toward

15.10 *The Lady in the Lake*: "our" mirror image and a subjective point of view.

location shooting, initiated during the war when the government imposed a limit on budgets for set construction, continued. The semidocumentary film, usually a police investigation or crime tale, staged a fictional narrative in existing locales and was often filmed with lightweight equipment developed in wartime. For example, *13 Rue Madeleine* (1947) and *The Naked City* (1948) used portable photofloods to light rooms for filming. *The Thief* (1952) was filmed in Washington, DC, and New York City, often concealing its camera; one shot, with the camera on a cart, tracked for five blocks. Such films, based on actual incidents, frequently featured a thunderous voice-over narration that evoked wartime documentaries and radio broadcasts.

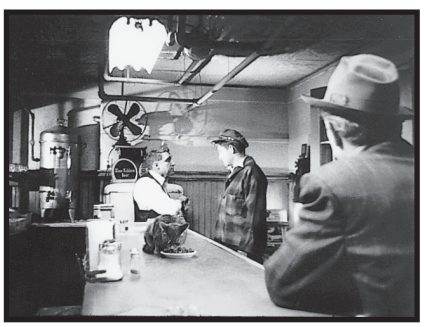
Sunset Blvd

15.11 *Sunset Blvd.*: As the man's voice-over recounts his own death, a striking underwater shot shows the police at the swimming pool investigating.

A complex flashback narrative and a semidocumentary feel might be found in the same film. *Sunset Blvd.* (1950), a memory narrated by a dead man, exploits actual Hollywood locations (**15.11**). One of the most intricate examples of artifice in the semidocumentary is Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing* (1956). Several men carry out a precisely timed robbery of a racetrack. Kubrick gives us newsreel-quality images of the track and the races, and many scenes use a dry "voice of God" commentator to specify the day and time of many scenes. Yet *The Killing* also manipulates time in a complex way. We see a bit of the robbery, and then the film skips back to show events leading up to that phase. As the film traces different lines of action, events are presented several times—an innovation 1990s filmmakers would push further.

Stylistic Changes

Kane had reinvigorated the use of long takes and deep-space imagery (see Cinematography Styles p. 195), and these techniques, taken up during the war, became even more prominent during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Scenes might now be filmed in a single shot (the so-called *plan-séquence*, or sequence shot; **15.12–15.17**).


The Asphalt Jungle

15.12 In *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), a three-minute sequence shot with movement in depth replaces traditional cutting. Within a deep-focus composition, the truck driver quarrels with Gus, the owner of the diner.

The Asphalt Jungle

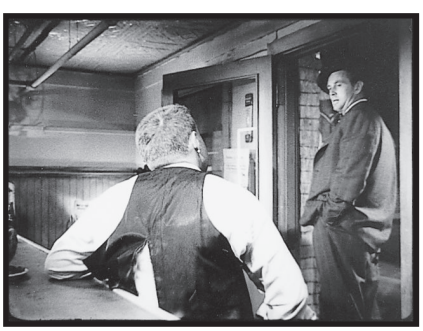
15.13 Gus shoves him out the door . . .

The Asphalt Jungle

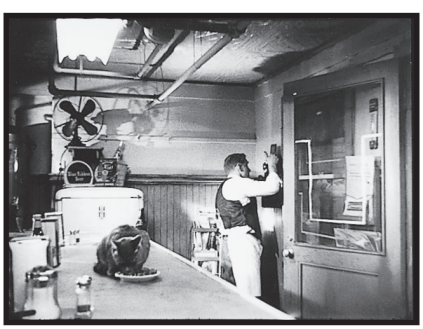
15.14 . . . and continues to berate him . . .

The Asphalt Jungle

15.15 . . . before coming to the foreground to advise Dix to lie low.


The Asphalt Jungle

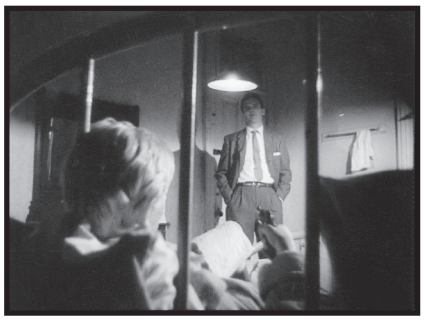
15.16 Dix leaves . . .


The Asphalt Jungle

15.17 . . . and Gus goes to the rear to make a phone call.

15.18 Deep focus emphasizes a gun-obsessed boy in *Gun Crazy* (1949).

15.19 Cinematographer John Alton's low-key lighting typified film noir (*T-Men*, 1948).



15.20 *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955): a densely cluttered shot with violence at its center.

15.21 High-key lighting in *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952).

Often the long take featured very fluid camera movement, facilitated by new *crab dollies*, which moved the camera freely in any direction. In addition, the vivid deep focus that had been a Welles-Toland trademark was widely imitated (**15.18**).

Many of these innovations were associated with film noir, the "dark" style that flourished until the end of the 1950s. Adventurous cinematographers pushed chiaroscuro lighting extremes (**15.19**). Film noirs became more outrageously baroque, with canted compositions and layers of visual clutter (**15.20**). These stylistic developments attracted enough notice to make them the target of satire. *Susan Slept Here* (1954) mocks the flashback narrative by having an Oscar statuette narrate the film. The "Girl Hunt" ballet in the musical *The Band Wagon* (1953) parodies the excesses of film noir.

In black-and-white dramas, *low-key lighting* schemes continued well into the 1960s, but films in other genres exploited the brighter, *high-key* look that had been established in the 1930s (**15.21**). Most melodramas, musicals, and comedies of the 1950s avoided chiaroscuro. Deep-focus cinematography continued well into the 1960s for black-and-white films, but color films usually cultivated shallow-focus imagery. And for some time, aggressive deep focus of the Wellesian sort proved difficult to achieve with CinemaScope's anamorphic lenses.

New Twists on Old Genres

With greater competition for the entertainment dollar, the major firms gave nearly all genres a higher gloss. As studios cut back on the number of films produced, each movie had to be more distinctive. Executives enhanced production values with bigger stars, opulent sets and costumes, and the resources of color and widescreen technology. Even minor genres benefited from efforts to turn B scripts into A pictures.

The Western The postwar Western was set on the "big-picture" trail by David O. Selznick with *Duel in the Sun* (1945). King Vidor was fired from this passion-drenched Technicolor saga before several other directors completed it. Roadshowed, it earned large grosses and set the pattern for *Red River* (1948), *Shane* (1953), *The Big Country* (1958), and other "super-Westerns."

More modest Westerns also benefited from enhanced production values, the maturity and range of the directors and stars, and a new narrative and thematic complexity. The genre helped John Wayne and James Stewart consolidate their postwar reputations. Color cinematography enhanced the majestic scenery of *The Naked Spur* (1953, Mann) and the rich costume design of Hawks's *Rio Bravo* (1959; **Color Plate 15.6**). At the same time, social and

psychological tensions were incorporated. A Western might be liberal (*Broken Arrow*, 1950), patriarchal (*Red River*; *The Gunfighter*, 1950), youth-oriented (*The Left-Handed Gun*, 1958), or psychological (the Ranown cycle directed by Budd Boetticher; Sam Peckinpah's *The Deadly Companions*, 1961).

While the typical B film had run between 60 and 70 minutes, *Duel in the Sun* clocked in at 130 minutes, *Red River* at 133, and *Shane* at 118. Even less epic Westerns tended to run longer; *Rio Bravo*'s charmingly rambling plot filled 141 minutes. Clearly such films were no longer designed to be the second half of a double feature; they were the sole attraction.

The Melodrama Enhanced production values also drove the melodrama to new heights. At Universal, producer Ross Hunter specialized in *women's pictures*, and central to his revamping of the genre was Douglas Sirk. Sirk was an émigré (see Popular Entertainment p. 240) who had made anti-Nazi pictures and film noirs during the 1940s. Working with cinematographer Russell Metty, Sirk lit Universal's plush sets in a melancholy, sinister low key. Psychologically impotent men and gallantly suffering women (*Magnificent Obsession*, 1954; *All That Heaven Allows*, 1955; *Written on the Wind*, 1956; *Imitation of Life*, 1959) play out their dramas in expressionistic pools of color and before harshly revealing mirrors (**Color Plates 15.7, 15.8**). Critics in later decades believed that Sirk's style undercut the scripts' pop-psychology traumas and pat happy endings.

The Musical No genre benefited more from upgrading than the musical, believed to be Hollywood's most durable product. Every studio made musicals, but the postwar decade was ruled by MGM. The studio's three production units mounted everything from operatic biopics to Esther Williams aquatic extravaganzas. Backstage musicals such as *The Barkleys of Broadway* (1949) were balanced by folk musicals such as *Show Boat* (1951). Adaptations of Broadway hits (e.g., *Kiss Me Kate*, 1953) were matched by original scripts (e.g., *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, 1954). A film might be built around a set of career hits from a single lyricist-composer team. *The Band Wagon*, for example, was based on the songs of Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz.

The most lauded musical unit at MGM was overseen by Arthur Freed, a top producer since *The Wizard of Oz*. The Freed unit showcased the best talents—Judy Garland, Fred Astaire, Vera-Ellen, Ann Miller, and, above all, Gene Kelly, the wiry, wide-grinning dancer who added athletic modern choreography to the MGM product. *On the Town* (1949, codirected by Kelly and Stanley Donen), a frenetic tale of three sailors on a day pass in Manhattan, was not the first film to stage its numbers on location, but the choreography and the cutting gave the film a hectic urban energy (**Color Plate 15.9**). In *Brigadoon* (1954, Vincente Minnelli) and *It's Always Fair Weather* (1955, Kelly and Donen), Kelly made the musical a sour comment on masculine frustrations in postwar America.

More lighthearted was *Singin' in the Rain* (1952, Kelly and Donen), considered the finest musical of the period. Set during the transition to talkies, the film pokes fun at Hollywood pretension while satirizing the style of early musicals and creating gags with out-of-sync sound. The numbers include Donald O'Connor's calisthenic "Make 'Em Laugh"; Kelly's title number, blending swooping crane shots with agile choreography that exploits puddles and umbrellas; and the "Broadway Melody" extravaganza, an homage to MGM's early sound musicals.

Although MGM continued to turn out striking musicals after the mid-1950s, it was no longer the leader. Goldwyn's *Guys and Dolls* (1955), Paramount's *Funny Face* (1957), UA's *West Side Story* (1961), Columbia's *Bye Bye Birdie* (1963), and Disney's animated ventures all made the "big musical" a box-office stalwart. 20th Century-Fox based several roadshow musicals on Broadway hits—*The King and I* (1956), *Carousel* (1956), and *South Pacific* (1958), followed a few years later by the biggest blockbuster of all, *The Sound of Music* (1965). Warners contributed to the genre with George Cukor's *A Star Is Born* (1954) and Doris Day vehicles such as *The Pajama Game* (1957) before dominating the 1960s with *The Music Man* (1962), *My Fair Lady* (1964), and *Camelot* (1967).

Rock and roll brought new dynamism to the postwar musical. *Rock around the Clock* (1956) paved the way, and soon both Majors and independents went after teenage record buyers. In *Love Me Tender* (1956), Elvis Presley went on to present a fairly sanitized version of rock and roll in thirty musicals over the next dozen years. The genre was mocked in Frank Tashlin's *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956), which nonetheless managed to include numbers by popular bands.

Historical Epics Westerns, melodramas, and musicals had been major genres for several decades, but the inflation of production values and the speculating on big pictures brought another genre to prominence. The biblical spectacle had proved lucrative in the hands of Cecil B. DeMille in the 1920s and 1930s, and he revived it in *Samson and Delilah*, the top-grossing film of 1949. When *Quo Vadis?* and *David and Bathsheba* (both 1951) also earned

exceptional receipts, a cycle of historical pageants was launched. The genre's need for crowds, colossal battles, and grandiose sets made it natural for widescreen processes, and so *The Robe*, its sequel *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954), and *Spartacus* (1960) all showcased widescreen technologies.

"Those who see this motion picture produced and directed by CECIL B. DEMILLE will make a pilgrimage over the very ground that Moses trod more than 3,000 years ago." Thus opens *The Ten Commandments* (1956), one of the most enduringly successful biblical epics. (The credit gives Moses only second billing.) The film used 25,000 extras and cost more than $13 million, a stupendous amount for the time. Despite ambitious special effects like the parting of the Red Sea, DeMille's staging often harked back to the horizontal blocking of his 1930s films **(Color Plate 15.10)**. William Wyler's *Ben-Hur* (1959) proved an equally successful biblical blockbuster.

Historical epics treated virtually every period. There were Egyptian pageants (*The Egyptian*, 1954; *Land of the Pharaohs*, 1955), chivalric adventures (*Ivanhoe*, 1952; *Knights of the Round Table*, 1953), and war sagas (*War and Peace*, 1956; *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, 1957). Most of these attracted audiences, but because of budget overruns in production, some ultimately proved unprofitable.

Upscaling Genres Another genre was revived by the new commitment to big pictures. As more readers embraced science fiction after the war, producer George Pal proved that the atomic age offered a market for science-fiction movies. The success of his *Destination Moon* (1950) gave him access to Paramount budgets for *When Worlds Collide* (1951) and two prestigious productions based on works by H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1953) and *The Time Machine* (1960). Using color and sophisticated special effects, Pal's films helped lift science fiction to a new respectability. *Forbidden Planet* (1956), with CinemaScope, electronic music, an "Id-beast," and a plot based on *The Tempest*, was a somewhat more forced effort to dignify the genre. Disney's first CinemaScope feature, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (1954), and the precise stop-motion work of Ray Harryhausen (e.g., *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, 1958) aided the rebirth of the fantasy film.

Less expensive science-fiction and horror films portrayed technology in a struggle with unknown nature. In *The Thing* (1951), scientists and military men discover a monstrous alien in the Arctic wastes. In *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), an average town is overrun by pods from outer space who clone the citizens and replace them with unfeeling replicas (**15.22**). Opposed to these paranoid fantasies were pacifist films, exemplified by *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, in which an alien urges earthlings to give up war. Special effects dominated films that portrayed eccentric science and misbegotten experiments, such as *The Fly* (1958) and *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957). Such films were often interpreted as commentaries on Cold War politics or the nightmarish effect of nuclear radiation.

Low-budget movies, in order to compete with the new scale of expenditures, had to find their own selling points. The crime film, for instance, became more violent. Menacing film noirs such as *Out of the Past* (1947) seemed subdued in comparison to the sadism of *The Big Heat* (1953) and *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955) and the brutality of a thug running down a little girl in *Underworld USA* (1961).

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

15.22 In *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Don Siegel uses a depth composition to let us see the pod-person waking up in the foreground before the weary characters notice it.

By the early 1960s, a genre film might be either a lavish blockbuster or a stark, seedy exercise. When the distinguished Hitchcock made a black-and-white thriller called *Psycho* (1960) without major stars and on a B-picture budget, he launched a cycle of grand guignol (e.g., *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*, 1962) that continued for decades. After fifteen years of dressing up genre formulas, leading filmmakers began to dirty them up.

MAJOR DIRECTORS: SEVERAL GENERATIONS

A few major directors ceased working or lost momentum after the war. Ernst Lubitsch died in 1947. Josef von Sternberg, who had left Paramount in the mid-1930s and worked sporadically through the 1940s, ended his career with two films for Howard Hughes and *The Saga of Anatahan* (1953), a Japan–US coproduction exuding the misty atmosphere of his prewar work. Frank Capra made *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), a mixture of homespun comedy and astonishingly cruel melodrama, but his few later features had little influence.

The Great Dictator had been the last bow of Charles Chaplin's Tramp. His experiments with other personae, coupled with controversies about his politics and personal life, made his popularity sink. *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947) centered on a quiet gentleman who murders his wives; *Limelight* (1952) was a testament to comic theater. Threatened with political persecution in the United States, Chaplin settled in Switzerland. *A King in New York* (1957) satirized American politics, while *A Countess from Hong Kong* (1967) bade farewell to the urbane comedy of *A Woman of Paris*.

Veterans of the Studio Era

Overall, however, a number of veteran directors continued to be central players in the postwar period. Cecil B. DeMille, Clarence Brown, Henry King, George Marshall, and others who had started directing during World War I remained active into the 1950s and even the 1960s. Raoul Walsh, for example, turned out masculine action films, and *Colorado Territory* and *White Heat* (both 1949) remain models of the trim, understated efficiency of Hollywood classicism.

John Ford remained prominent. His Technicolor Irish comedy-drama *The Quiet Man* (1952) gave its backer, the B-studio Republic, new credibility. The sparkling location photography, the interplay of spirited romance and brawling comedy, and a buoyant epilogue in which the performers salute the audience have made *The Quiet Man* one of Ford's most enduring pictures, a utopian fulfillment of the nostalgic longing for home that permeates *How Green Was My Valley*.

The bulk of Ford's postwar work was in the Western genre. *My Darling Clementine* (1946) is an ode to frontier life, shot in the rich depth and chiaroscuro that Ford had pioneered a decade earlier. His Cavalry trilogy—*Fort Apache*, 1948; *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, 1949; *Rio Grande*, 1950—pays homage to the close-knit military unit. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), widely taken as Ford's elegy for the frontier myth, has the simplicity of a fable: the heroic side of the West dies in the corruption brought by the railroad and Washington politics.

The Searchers (1956), arguably Ford's most complex Western, centers on Ethan Edwards, who pursues the Comanche who have killed his brother's family and carried off his niece Debbie. His saddle partner Martin Pawley gradually realizes that Ethan intends not to rescue Debbie but to kill her for becoming an Indian wife. Seldom had the Western shown such a complex protagonist, in which devotion and pride struggle against violent racism and sexual jealousy.

The continuity of Ford's style is evident in *The Searchers*. The film's color scheme reflects the changing seasons across Monument Valley (**Color Plate 15.11**). Fordian depth of space emerges in an evocative motif of doorway framings (**15.23–15.25**). Even John Wayne's final gesture of clasping his forearm is modeled on a gesture Harry Carey had used in *Straight Shooting* (1917).

Other veteran directors continued to practice their craft despite the studios' decline. William Wyler directed notable dramas and studio pictures into the 1960s, earning large box-office revenues with *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) and *Ben-Hur*. The deep-focus, wide-angle look was already muted in *Best Years* (**15.26**); Wyler largely left the technique to directors working in genres more oriented to suspense or action. Howard Hawks made comedies and action-adventure films until 1970. King Vidor turned to spectacles (*War and Peace*) after directing overblown, delirious melodramas such as *The Fountainhead* (1949). George Stevens created several of the era's biggest hits, notably *Shane* (1953) and *Giant* (1956).

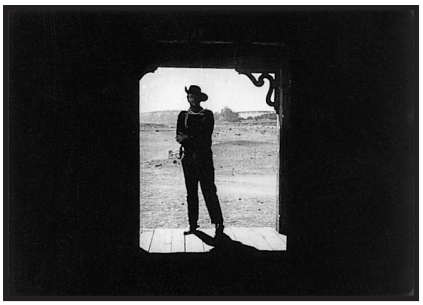
Of the directors specializing in melodramas, comedies, and musicals, Vincente Minnelli and George Cukor stand out for their shrewd use of long takes. Cukor's *A Star Is Born* (1954) daringly activates the edges of the 'Scope frame. And his quietly watching camera permits the players full sway in their performances (**15.27**). Minnelli's melodramas use distant framings to juxtapose the characters with symbolic décor (**15.28**).

The Searchers

15.23 In *The Searchers*, the motif is established in the first shot when the mother opens the door onto the desert.

The Searchers

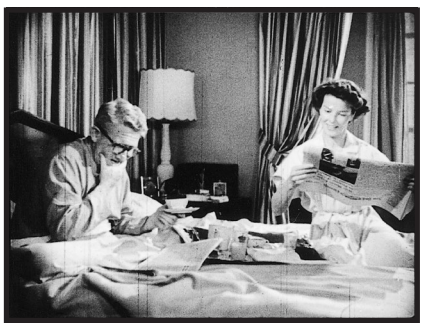
15.24 Later, Ford reminds us of the destroyed home by shooting through the opening of the smoke house in which the mother's body lies.


The Searchers

15.25 The end of a search: after bringing Debbie back to the settlement, Ethan cannot reenter civilization.

The Best Years of Our Lives

15.26 Moderate deep focus in *The Best Years of Our Lives*.


Adam's Rib

15.27 In *Adam's Rib* (1949), a long take records the wry interplay between an attorney (Katharine Hepburn) and her district attorney husband (Spencer Tracy).

The Cobweb

15.28 *The Cobweb* (1955): in a sanitarium, authorities confront each other before the controversial drapes.

Émigrés Stay On

Some émigré directors, such as Jean Renoir and Max Ophüls, returned to Europe fairly soon after the end of the war, but others stayed on and flourished. The most successful was Alfred Hitchcock (see Alfred Hitchcock box). Fritz Lang continued to make sober, somber genre pictures that radiated paranoid unease, such as *Rancho Notorious* (1952) and *The Big Heat* (**15.29**). Billy Wilder became a top director noted for irony-laden dramas (*Sunset Blvd.*, 1950; *Ace in the Hole*, 1951; *Witness for the Prosecution*, 1958) and cynical erotic comedies (*The Seven-Year Itch*, 1955; *The Apartment*, 1960; *Irma La Douce*, 1963). *Some Like It Hot* (1959), less mordant than Wilder's usual work, delighted audiences with its cross-dressing gags (**15.30**).

Another émigré, Otto Preminger, cultivated a distinctive personality both as an actor (in Wilder's *Stalag 17*, 1953) and as a director. His despotic temper was sometimes compared to Erich von Stroheim's, but Preminger was no spendthrift; as his own producer, he counted every penny. Partly to trim shooting time, he pushed the long-take technique even further than Cukor and Minnelli. The average shot in *Fallen Angel* (1945) lasts about half a minute, the same as in his 'Scope musical *Carmen Jones* (1954).

The Big Heat

15.29 The rogue cop finds his way blocked in Lang's *The Big Heat* (1953).

Some Like It Hot

15.30 *Some Like It Hot*: Jack Lemmon, as "Daphne," dances a passionate tango with Joe E. Brown.

Although Preminger ingeniously composed his CinemaScope frame (**15.33**), most of his long takes refuse expressive effects. There are seldom elaborate camera maneuvers or virtuoso performances; the camera simply observes poker-faced people, most of whom are lying to one another. This impassivity makes Preminger's film noirs and adaptations of middlebrow best-sellers intriguingly opaque.

Welles's Struggle with Hollywood

A much more flamboyant strategy was pursued by Orson Welles. Discharged from RKO after *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), Welles became a vagabond director. He turned in pictures for Columbia, Republic, and Universal, but he produced other films on a shoestring, with funds scraped together from European backers and his film performances (e.g., in Carol Reed's rather Wellesian *The Third Man*, 1949).

Welles directed and starred in versions of *Macbeth* (1948), *Othello* (1952), and *The Trial* (1962), and he ventured into crime thrillers (*The Lady from Shanghai*, 1948; *Mr. Arkadin*, 1955; *Touch of Evil*, 1958). To all he brought the extroverted technique he had pioneered in *Kane*—Gothic chiaroscuro, deep-focus imagery, sound tracks of shattering dynamic range, brooding dissolves, abrupt cuts, overlapping and interruptive dialogue, and intricate camera movement. The climax of *The Lady from Shanghai*, a shoot-out in a funhouse hall of mirrors, is less a plausible resolution of the drama than a virtuoso display of disorienting imagery (**15.34**). *Touch of Evil*, beginning with one of the most baroque camera movements in Hollywood history, brought the film noir to new heights. In *Chimes at Midnight* (1967), an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays, Welles presented the most kinetic, harrowing battle sequence of the era (**15.35**). Welles haunted the studios in the 1970s and 1980s, hoping to finish his long-running projects. *The Other Side of the Wind* was completed by others and released in 2019.

The Impact of the Theater

Welles had come to Hollywood from New York left-wing theater, and several other directors followed him. Jules Dassin started in this vein before turning out harsh crime films (e.g., *Brute Force*, 1947; *The Naked City*, 1948). Joseph Losey worked in the Federal Theatre project and directed Brecht's play *Galileo* (1947) before entering filmmaking with *The Boy with Green Hair* (1948). The HUAC hearings drove Dassin and Losey into exile.

During the 1930s, the Group Theatre transplanted to America the naturalistic acting "Method" taught by Konstantin Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theater. The most influential Group alumnus was Elia Kazan, who established himself in Hollywood while continuing to direct the Broadway premieres of *Death of a Salesman*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. After specializing in liberal social-problem films, Kazan moved rapidly to distinguished adaptations of works by Tennessee Williams—*A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and *Baby Doll* (1956)—as well as to socially critical films such as *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), which warns of the political abuses of television.

After the war, Kazan and two New York colleagues founded the Actors Studio. They believed that Stanislavsky's Method required the actor to ground the performance in personal experiences. Improvisation was one path to a natural, if sometimes painful and risky, portrayal. Kazan's conception of Method acting found its most famous exponent in Marlon Brando. A prototypical

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

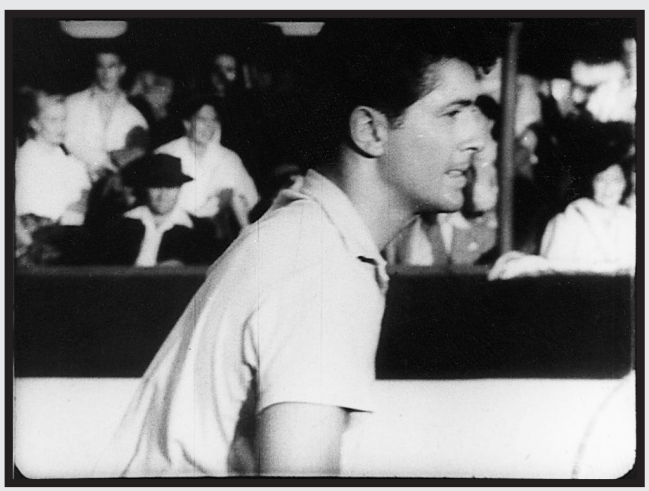
Apart from the filmmakers who were also performers (Chaplin, Jerry Lewis), Hitchcock was probably the most publicly recognizable director of the postwar years. The press delightedly reported his remarks: "Actors are cattle"; "A film is not a slice of life but a slice of cake"; "Ingrid, it's only a movie" (after Bergman had sought to understand her role's motivation). His walk-on appearances, quizzically observing the crises his plots set in motion, guaranteed a moment of laughter. His image as the "Master of Suspense" was marketed through shrewd spin-offs: chatty trailers, a mystery magazine, and a television show, with Hitchcock introducing each episode in phlegmatically ghoulish tones.

Above all, the films themselves carried the stamp of his fussy, childish delight in discomfiting the audience. Like his mentors, the Soviet Montage directors, he aimed at a pure, almost physical response. His goal was not mystery or horror but suspense. His plots, whether drawn from novels or his own imagination, hinged on recurring figures and situations: the innocent man plunged into a vortex of guilt and suspicion, the mentally disturbed woman, the charming and amoral killer, the humdrum locale with tensions seething underneath. The consistency of his stories and themes furnished evidence for the European critics who proposed that an American studio director could be the creator—the "author"—of his work (see The Rise and Spread of the Auteur Theory p. 365).

Many critics found Hitchcock's postwar work to be his finest. *Strangers on a Train* (1951) employs taut crosscutting to divide our sympathies between hero and villain (**15.31**, **15.32**). The semidocumentary *The Wrong Man* (1956) invests a drab news story with harsh anguish. *Vertigo* (1958) uses location shooting and Bernard Herrmann's haunting score to pull the spectator into a hallucinatory tale of a man obsessed with a woman whom he believes he has killed (**Color Plate 15.12**). Hitchcock's films gave Cary Grant, James Stewart, and Henry Fonda brooding roles suited to their maturing star images.

Hitchcock flaunted his stylistic ingenuity, embedding into each script a set piece that aroused suspense in the teeth of outrageous implausibility: an assassination is attempted during an orchestra concert (*The Man Who Knew Too Much*, 1956), and a crop-dusting airplane tries to shoot down the protagonist (*North by Northwest*, 1959). Sometimes Hitchcock set himself a technical challenge: *Rope* (1948) consists of eleven long takes. In *Rear Window* (1951), by contrast, hundreds of shots are assembled to induce the viewer to share the hero's belief that a man living across the courtyard has committed murder (**Color Plates 15.13, 15.14**).

Hitchcock's calculations of public taste were farsighted. *Psycho* (1960) triggered several cycles of homicidal films, up to the "slasher" movies of the 1980s; *The Birds* (1963) anticipated the "vengeful nature" horror film. Like most veteran directors, he floundered in the mid-1960s, but *Frenzy* (1972) proved that he could still craft a plot that outfoxed the audience and that his technical virtuosity could leave viewers at once anxious and amused.



Strangers on a Train

15.31 *Strangers on a Train*: while the hero desperately tries to finish a tennis match in time . . .

Strangers on a Train

15.32 . . . the villain scrabbles for the lighter he needs in order to frame the hero for a murder. Hitchcock makes the audience root for both.

Advise and Consent

15.33 *Advise and Consent* (1962): in the US Senate, Preminger's 'Scope frame registers different reactions to a blustering speech.

The Lady from Shanghai

15.34 The final shoot-out in a mirror maze in *The Lady from Shanghai*.

Chimes at Midnight

15.35 *Chimes at Midnight*: a deep-space view of a chaotic battle, with the camera flanked by the warriors' furiously scuffling legs.

On the Waterfront

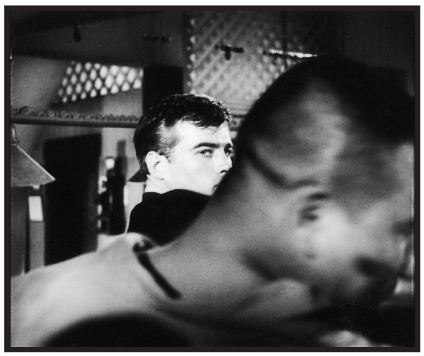
15.36 In a long take, Terry toys with Edie's glove, keeping her with him while he expresses his reluctant interest in her (*On the Waterfront*).

Method exercise occurs in Kazan's *On the Waterfront* (1954), in which Terry toys with Edie's casually dropped glove. Keeping her glove becomes a pretext for making her linger with him, but—as he straightens the fingers, plucks lint from it, even tries it on—it also expresses his awkward attraction to her and provides an echo of the childhood teasing he recalls (**15.36**). Method acting was to have an enormous influence on Hollywood through Kazan, Brando, James Dean, Karl Malden, and other Actors Studio participants.

Nicholas Ray worked with the Group Theatre before serving as assistant director to Kazan on *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945). He began directing with a painful tale of a runaway couple drawn into the outlaw life, *They Live by Night* (1948). Always a fringe figure, Ray specialized in films about men whose toughness masks a self-destructive compulsion. *In a Lonely Place* (1950) implicates a Hollywood scriptwriter in a murder, revealing his narcissistic exploitation of others. In the offbeat Western *Johnny Guitar* (1954), the weary gunfighter is dominated by the hard-as-nails saloon lady; the film climaxes with a showdown between two gun-toting women. *Rebel without a Cause* (1954) showcases James Dean as another tormented hero, childishly passive and uncertain; it also demonstrates Ray's forceful use of the CinemaScope frame. In the opening police-station scene, Judy, Plato, and Jim are brought together unbeknown to one another. The wide framing tucks them into discrete pockets of the set (**Color Plate 15.15**). After several other "male melodramas," Ray ended his Hollywood career with two historical epics, *King of Kings* (1961) and *55 Days at Peking* (1963).

New Directors

Another group of postwar directors emerged from script-writing: Richard Brooks (*The Blackboard Jungle*, 1955; *Elmer Gantry*, 1960), Joseph Mankiewicz (*All about Eve*, 1950; *The Barefoot Contessa*, 1954), and Robert Rossen (*Johnny O'Clock*, 1947; *The Hustler*, 1961). The most idiosyncratic talent was Samuel Fuller, who had been a scenarist for a decade before he directed his first film, *I Shot Jesse James* (1949). A former reporter for New York tabloids, Fuller brought a B-film sensibility to every project. He relied on intense close-ups, off-center framings, and shock editing to underscore his tales of underworld treachery or men facing death in combat.



The Crimson Kimono

15.37 Using karate on a villain, and the viewer, in *The Crimson Kimono*.

King of Kings

15.38 Depth staging for a jury deliberation in *12 Angry Men*.

Fuller went straight for the viscera. During a fistfight in *Pickup on South Street* (1953), a man is dragged down a flight of stairs, his chin bumping on each step. At the showdown of *Forty Guns* (1957), a cowboy punk uses his sister as a shield. The lawman coolly shoots her. As she falls, he proceeds to fire several rounds into the astonished youth. In *China Gate* (1957), a soldier hiding from an enemy patrol steps on a spike trap, and Fuller cuts from shots of his sweating face to extreme close-ups of spikes protruding from his boot. Fuller enjoyed staging fight scenes that assault the viewer (**15.37**). The opening of *The Naked Kiss* (1964) turns its fury on the audience, with a woman directly striking the camera.

Other directors had a comparable, if less raw, aggressiveness. Robert Aldrich built *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955) and *Attack!* (1956) out of the hollow dialogue and outrageous sadism of pulp fiction. Don Siegel's police films, along with *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, show a rapid pace learned during his days as an editor at Warners. Like Fuller and Aldrich, Anthony Mann was strongly influenced by Welles, staging fight scenes in great depth and hurling his combatants at the audience. "In the films of these hard-edged directors," wrote critic Manny Farber, "can be found the unheralded ripple of physical experience."[2]

Some new directors specialized in grotesque comedy. Frank Tashlin, former animator and children's book illustrator, made several imaginative satires on 1950s culture (*The Girl Can't Help It*, 1956; *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*, 1957), as well as directing Jerry Lewis after Lewis split with his comedic partner, Dean Martin.

The oldest practitioners in the years from 1945 to 1960 learned their craft in the silent cinema or the talkies; the postwar newcomers typically started in theater or in the studio system. The youngest generation, who began making films in the mid-1950s, often started in television. John Frankenheimer, Sidney Lumet, Martin Ritt, and Arthur Penn directed live broadcast dramas in New York before turning to feature films. They brought to cinema a "television aesthetic" of big close-ups, constricted sets, deep-focus cinematography, and dialogue-laden scripts. *The Young Stranger* (1957, Frankenheimer), *12 Angry Men* (1957, Lumet), *Edge of the City* (1957, Ritt), and *The Left-Handed Gun* (1958, Penn) exemplified this trend (**15.38**). These directors would be among the first to borrow from European art cinema and the new waves.

Despite the upheavals in the industry, filmmakers from several generations and backgrounds made postwar Hollywood movies a central force again in world cinema. The system had lost economic stability, but the genres and styles of classical filmmaking supplied a framework within which directors could create idiosyncratic, powerful films. The ambitious young filmmakers who came to prominence in Europe in the early 1960s often turned to postwar Hollywood for inspiration.

REFERENCES

1. Sam Arkoff and Richard Trubo, *Flying through Hollywood by the Seat of My Pants* (New York: Birch Lane, 1992), p. 4.
2. Manny Farber, "Underground Films [1957]," in *Negative Space* (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 17.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On flashbacks in 1940s films: "Chinese boxes, Russian dolls, and Hollywood movies"
On Cinerama: "The wayward charms of Cinerama"
On David O. Selznick in the 1940s: "A dose of DOS: Trade secrets from Selznick"
On Chaplin and the crime thriller: "MONSIEUR VERDOUX: Lethal Lothario"

CHAPTER 16

Death of a Cyclist

POSTWAR EUROPEAN CINEMA: NEOREALISM AND ITS CONTEXT, 1945–1959

Open City

In 1945, much of Europe lay in ruins. Thirty-five million people were dead, more than half of them civilians. Millions of survivors had lost their homes. Factories were obliterated, damaged, or obsolete. Great cities—Rotterdam, Cologne, Dresden—were rubble. All European countries were massively in debt; Britain had lost one-quarter of its prewar wealth, while Denmark's economy had regressed to its 1930 level. This conflagration was the most devastating the world had yet seen.

THE POSTWAR CONTEXT

Europe would have to start again, but according to what principles? Socialists and Communists believed that social revolution could start from scratch in this "year zero." In some countries, left-wing parties won substantial popular support. By 1952, however, the left's power had waned. Europe's most industrially advanced countries were dominated by conservative and moderate parties. World War II had demonstrated that a modern government could oversee a nation's economy, and most European countries introduced centralized economic planning. This mildly "socialistic" reform, along with emerging welfare-state policies pioneered in Scandinavia, blunted some left-wing calls for radical change.

The victory of moderate reconstruction took place in a changed international context. The war had been won thanks to the United States and the Soviet Union; Europe was no longer the leader of world affairs. The postwar scene was bipolar, dominated by the United States and the USSR. The Cold War between these superpowers would affect every nation.

The United States helped consolidate the new Europe. In 1947, the European Recovery Plan, popularly known as the Marshall Plan, offered billions of dollars in aid. By the time the plan ended in 1952, industrial and

agricultural production in Europe had surpassed prewar levels. Europe's "great boom" in employment, standard of living, and productivity was under way. In exchange for helping Europe rebuild, however, the United States expected political allegiance. In 1949, the United States presided over the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance that committed members to oppose the USSR and national Communist parties. Yet, many governments resisted the imposition of American will, sometimes through legislation that tried to constrain the power of American investment.

The growth of American power after World War I had convinced many Europeans that only a "United States of Europe" could compete in the new arena (see Postwar Animosities Fade p. 145). The "European Idea" was revived in the 1940s, when it became evident that countries would need to cooperate in order to rebuild. Moreover, the United States supported the pan-European idea because it believed a prosperous Europe would resist Communism and offer markets for American goods.

The United Nations (founded in 1945), the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), and, in 1957, the European Economic Community (known as the Common Market) constituted steps toward the goal of European unity. Yet the dream of a Europe without national boundaries was not realized. Nations insisted on their distinct cultural identities. Many Europeans argued that in the wake of American economic and political domination had come a cultural imperialism—that advertising, fashion, and mass media had made Europe into a colony of the United States. In the postwar era, we find a complex, often tense interplay among nationalism, European unity, allegiance to America, and resistance to it.

FILM INDUSTRIES AND FILM CULTURE

The war had cut the flow of American films to most countries. This cleared space for local industries and nurtured indigenous talent. After the war, however, the American companies strove to reintroduce their product into the lucrative market.

US foreign aid paved the way for American movies' reentry into European markets. Hollywood's overseas negotiations were conducted by the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA; see The Decline of the Hollywood Studio System p. 287), and the agency used its power forcefully. In France, the US government backed up Hollywood's export agreements. The MPEAA argued that Hollywood films were excellent propaganda against Communist and Fascist tendencies. This argument carried the most weight in Germany.

Hollywood's strategy was to make each country's domestic industry strong enough to support the large-scale distribution and exhibition of American films. Penetration was quick. By 1953, in most countries, American films occupied at least half of screening time. Ever since, Europe has been Hollywood's major source of foreign revenue.

West Germany: "Papas Kino"

West Germany offers a case study in how quickly the United States could penetrate a major market. Between 1945 and 1949, Germany was occupied by the Allied powers. In 1949, the merged Western zones became the German Federal Republic (commonly known as West Germany), and the Russian zone became the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). West Germany received millions of dollars in US aid, aimed at turning the country into a bulwark against Communism. By 1952, the German "economic miracle" produced a standard of living almost 50 percent above that of the prewar period.

Superficially, the film industry seemed healthy as well. Production climbed from 5 films in 1946 to 103 in 1953 and did not fall below 100 during the 1950s. Attendance surged and coproductions flourished. Hildegard Knef, Curd Jürgens, Maria Schell, and other German stars gained wide recognition.

Yet the industry failed to foster an internationally competitive cinema. Soon after 1945, American movie companies had convinced the US government to help make the German market an outpost of Hollywood. The old Ufi monopoly (see The Nazi Regime and the Film Industry p. 236) was replaced by hundreds of production and distribution companies. With Hitler's empire gone, these firms could count only on the domestic market, and this was dominated by American firms. Hollywood controlled a large part of distribution and was permitted to use blind- and block-booking tactics recently outlawed in the United States. With no quota restrictions, up to two-thirds of German theaters' screening time was occupied by American films.

As in other countries, the bulk of production leaned toward popular entertainment, literary adaptations, and remakes of classics. The most popular genre was the *Heimat* ("homeland") film, the tale of village romance, which represented 20 percent of the domestic output. Other quality production of the era consisted of war films or biographies of statesmen and professionals.

Some postwar cinema critically scrutinized the war and its effects. Peter Lorre's *Der Verlorene* (*The Lost One*, 1951) uses flashbacks to present a doctor haunted

The Lost One

The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse

16.1, *left* Echoes of *M*: Peter Lorre's hand dawdling as he is about to kill his wife in *The Lost One*.

16.2, *right* "Innocent" voyeurism in *The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse*: a false mirror allows the millionaire to spy on the woman he wishes to seduce.

by the wartime murders he has committed. The film, like many of its era, makes macabre play with mirrors and shadows, but Lorre also adorned his performance with mildly Expressionist touches (**16.1**). The early postwar years also saw the emergence of the *Trümmerfilm* ("rubble film"), which dealt with the problems of reconstructing Germany (see Emergence from Wartime Conditions p. 352).

Not until the end of the 1950s did filmmakers suggest that traces of Nazism lingered on. Wolfgang Staudte's *Roses for the State Prosecutor* (1959) and *Fairground* (1960) show ex-SS men prospering under the economic miracle. More oblique in its treatment of the past is Fritz Lang's thriller *The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse* (1960). Here a criminal doctor uses hidden television cameras to spy on the guests at the Hotel Luxor. By invoking the figure of Mabuse (in the postwar years considered a parallel to Hitler), by suggesting that many characters share his voyeurism, at a hotel built by the Nazis for espionage purposes (**16.2**), *Thousand Eyes* hints that the Fascist era survives into the present.

The charge could well have been addressed to the industry at large. Although a few Nazi-era filmmakers (such as Leni Riefenstahl) were forbidden to work, most were rehabilitated under Allied policy. Some Nazi supporters were given prestigious posts; Veit Harlan, for example, directed eight films in the postwar decades. This continuity with the Fascist era, and the largely complacent film culture that it spawned, would be attacked by young directors of the 1960s, who called for an end to *Papas Kino* ("Papa's cinema").

Resistance to US Encroachment

Germany escaped total US domination; ticket sales for local films exceeded those of Hollywood imports. Other European film industries took more active steps to survive. A common and fairly successful strategy was protectionist legislation. As American films flooded the market, producers pleaded for help, and most governments responded.

Protectionist Measures One strategy, already exercised in the interwar years, was that of setting quotas on American movies or on screen time allotted to the domestic product. In 1948, France limited American imports and required that at least twenty weeks per year be devoted to French films. In the same year, Britain's New Films Act required that theaters devote at least 45 percent of screen time for British feature films. Italy's "Andreotti law" of 1949 required that eighty days per year be set aside for Italian films, and numerical quotas on imports soon followed.

Another strategy was to restrict American firms' income. This might be done before the fact by levying charges on each film's expected earnings. Alternatively, a flat rate might be charged. The Andreotti law required that for each imported film, the distributor had in effect to provide Italian film production an interest-free loan of 2.5 million lire. Or a country's legislation might provide for "freezing" American earnings, requiring that they be kept and invested in the country. In France, for instance, a 1948 agreement provided for a freezing of $10 million in earnings per year.

Most European countries took further steps to make their industries competitive. Governments began to finance production. Sometimes, as in Denmark, a tax on movie tickets created a fund that advanced monies to producers judged worthy. In several countries, the government established an agency through which banks could loan money to film projects; the best known is Britain's National Film Finance Corporation, established in 1949. A government might also offer cash prizes for scripts or films judged culturally significant. Sometimes it subsidized a project outright, through a mechanism that returned to producers a percentage of ticket income or tax. European producing firms soon became dependent on government aid.

Protectionist legislation and government support were somewhat successful. Film output rose significantly in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom after 1950. But the new interventionism could also aid American firms. Most governments encouraged US companies to invest their frozen funds in local production, which yielded further profits for Hollywood. The Majors might earn money from distributing foreign films to American art theaters. Frozen-funds policies encouraged US companies to undertake runaway productions (see The Decline of the Hollywood Studio System p. 287). American firms also established foreign subsidiaries. These were eligible for local government assistance and could lobby for Hollywood's interests within each country. In Germany and some other countries, the Hollywood Majors bought distribution outlets, thus controlling the access that domestic films had to their own market. At the same time, quotas became less significant because they coincided with a 1950s downturn in American production: the major companies did not need to export as many films.

International Cooperation One tactic for challenging Hollywood's domination moved toward the 1920s goal of Film Europe by creating coproductions (see Postwar Animosities Fade p. 145). Here producers drew the cast and crew from two or more countries under agreements that allowed the project to qualify for subsidies from each nation. Typically, each coproduction had a majority and a minority partner, with each one's responsibilities stipulated by the international accords. Thus, in a French–Italian coproduction, if the French company was the primary participant, the director had to be French, but an assistant director, a scriptwriter, one major actor, and one secondary performer had to be Italian. Coproductions spread out financial risks, allowed producers to mount bigger-budget fare that might compete with Hollywood's, and gave access to international markets. The coproduction quickly became central to Western European filmmaking.

Technological Innovations Although Hollywood set the international standard in film technology, a few European innovations competed on the Continent. At the end of the 1940s, Eclair and Debrie introduced lightweight cameras with relatively large magazines and reflex viewing, which allowed the camera operator to see, during filming, exactly what the lens was recording. These cameras were taken up throughout Europe, as was the German Arriflex (dating back to 1936 but improved in 1956). The Arriflex would become the standard nonstudio 35 mm camera of the postwar era. In 1953, a French inventor devised the Pancinor, a zoom lens that retained sharpness of focus in all shot scales.

Specialized Film Exhibition and Film Archives Some pan-European initiatives created genuine worldwide cooperation. In 1947, the International Federation of Ciné-Clubs was founded in order to join independent film societies in twenty countries. By 1955, there was a European confederation of Cinémas d'Art et d'Essai—theaters that programmed more innovative and experimental films, often aided by tax rebates. The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), was founded in 1938 but suspended during the war years. FIAF contacts were renewed at a 1945 conference, and in the next decade membership jumped from four to thirty-three archives. The growth in international film consciousness spurred governments to fund archives that would systematically document and preserve the world's film culture. Major American archives such as the Museum of Modern Art, the International Museum of Photography in Rochester, and the Library of Congress Motion Picture Division joined the international effort.

Film Festivals Another international initiative of the postwar era was the film festival. It was, most evidently, a competition among productions for prizes awarded by panels of experts. Thus films shown "in competition" would be high-quality representatives of a nation's film culture. The prototype was the Venice Film Festival, run under Benito Mussolini's patronage between 1932 and 1940. In the postwar era, festivals helped define the public's conception of advanced world cinema. Festivals also showcased films that might attract foreign distributors. Winning a prize gave a film an economic advantage; the director, producer, and stars gained fame (and perhaps investment for their next ventures). At the same time, many films would be shown "out of competition"—screened for the press, the public, and interested producers, distributors, and exhibitors.

The Venice Film Festival was revived in 1946. Festivals in Cannes, Locarno, and Karlovy Vary began in the same year. The postwar years saw a steady increase in festivals worldwide: Edinburgh (beginning in 1947), Berlin (1951), Melbourne (1952), San Sebastian and Sydney (1954), San Francisco and London (1957), and Moscow and Barcelona (1959). There were festivals of short films, animation, horror films, science-fiction films, and experimental films. There also appeared an enormous number of "festivals of festivals," usually noncompetitive events that showcased outstanding works from the major festivals. In North America, festivals began in New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Telluride, and Montreal. By the early 1960s, a film devotee could attend festivals year-round. In

recent decades, festivals have multiplied, forming a distribution and exhibition circuit parallel to commercial theatrical showings (see Chapter 28).

Coproductions, technological innovations, and festivals were not straightforward counterattacks on American domination. Just as US companies invested in European cinema, they also participated in coproductions through their continental subsidiaries. Hollywood filmmakers had access to Arriflexes and used them on occasion, and they had their own zoom lens: the Cooke Zoomar. American films often won both prizes and distribution contracts at European festivals. Hollywood even paid tribute to its peers by creating (in 1948) a new category of the Academy Awards. A winner of the Oscar for foreign language film stood a good chance of success in the United States, where American distributors and theaters would reap a share of the benefits.

Most European film industries enjoyed good health during the 1950s. Production increased within a modest range, sometimes exceeding prewar levels. Television and other competitive leisure activities had not yet emerged on a large scale, and the new generation of postwar youth filled the theaters. As a result, in the most populous countries, the period from 1955 to 1958 represented a peak in postwar attendance. Hollywood and its European counterparts had reached a mutually profitable stability.

Art Cinema: The Return of Modernism

Most European films continued popular traditions from earlier decades: comedies, musicals, melodramas, and other genres, sometimes imitative of Hollywood. But now European films competed successfully internationally and won acclaim at film festivals. There was a growing population of young people interested in less standardized fare and a new generation of filmmakers trained during the war. More broadly, European social and intellectual life was reviving. Artists envisaged the possibility of continuing the modernist tradition of the early decades of the century. In a recovering Europe, modernism, always promising "the shock of the new," became revitalized.

This situation fostered the emergence of an international art cinema. This cinema largely turned away from popular traditions and allied itself with experimentation in literature, painting, music, and theater. In some ways, the postwar art film marked a resurgence of the modernist impulses of the 1920s, explored in French Impressionism, German Expressionism, and Soviet Montage. There were some specific links to these earlier movements: the Italian Neorealists followed the Soviet filmmakers in using nonactors in lead roles, while some Scandinavian directors had distinct Expressionist leanings. In other ways, though, postwar filmmakers forged a revised modernism suitable to the sound cinema.

Modernism: Style and Form Postwar modernism can be described by three stylistic and formal features. First, filmmakers sought to be truer to life than they considered most previous filmmakers had been. The modernist filmmaker might seek to reveal the unpleasant realities of class antagonism or to bring home the horrors of Fascism, war, and occupation. The Italian Neorealists, filming in the streets and emphasizing current social problems, offered the most evident example.

This *objective realism* led filmmakers toward episodic, slice-of-life narratives that avoided Hollywood's tight plots. The camera might linger on a scene after the action concluded or refuse to eliminate those moments in which "nothing happens." Similarly, postwar European modernist films favored open-ended narratives, in which central plotlines were left unresolved. This was often justified as the most realistic approach to storytelling, because in life, few things are neatly tied up.

Stylistically, many modernist filmmakers came to rely on the long take—the abnormally lengthy shot, typically sustained by camera movements. The long take could be justified as presenting the event in continuous "real time," without the manipulations of editing. Similarly, new acting styles—halting delivery, fragmentary dialogue, and a refusal to meet other players' eyes—ran counter to the rapid, smoothly crafted performances of American cinema. Faithfulness to objective reality could also imply a minute reproduction of the acoustic environment. In many postwar French films, for example, silence calls attention to small noises.

Modernist filmmakers' drive to record objective reality was balanced by a second strategy. They also sought to represent *subjective reality*—the psychological forces that make the individual act in particular ways. The whole of mental life now lay open to exploration. As in the United States, flashback construction became common, particularly for exploring recent history in a personal way. Filmmakers plunged ever further into characters' minds, revealing dreams, hallucinations, and fantasies. Here the influence of French Impressionism and German Expressionism was often evident (**16.3**). The emphasis on subjectivity increased throughout the 1950s and the 1960s.

A third feature of the European art films of the postwar era is *authorial commentary*—the sense that an intelligence outside the film's world is pointing out something

about the events we see. Here film style seems to be suggesting more about the characters than they know or are aware of. In a shot from *Il Grido* (1957), Michelangelo Antonioni evokes the bleakness of the characters' relationship by framing them, backs to the camera, against a barren landscape (**16.4**). In *Le Plaisir* (1952), Max Ophüls's camera pans and tracks down from cherubs in the church to prostitutes in the pews, suggesting that the women are blessed by their attendance at a young girl's confirmation. At the limit, such narrational commentary could become *reflexive*, pointing up the film's own artifice and reminding the audience that the world onscreen is a fictional construct.

Wild Strawberries

16.3 The bleached-out nightmare in Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957).

Il Grido

16.4 Authorial commentary on the characters' lack of feeling in *Il Grido*.

Modernist Ambiguity Authorial commentary is usually far from clear-cut in its implications; you can imagine alternative interpretations of the shots just mentioned. In fact, ambiguity is a central effect of all three features in the postwar modernist European film. The film will typically encourage the spectator to speculate on what might otherwise have happened, to fill in gaps, and to try out different interpretations.

In Michael Cacoyannis's *Stella* (Greece, 1955), for example, two lovers, Milto and Stella, have quarreled and separated. Each one picks up another partner, and each couple goes to a different nightspot. But Cacoyannis crosscuts the two lovers: Milto dancing to Greek music and Stella dancing to bebop (**16.5**, **16.6**). The editing makes them appear to be dancing with each other. This might be taken as representing mental subjectivity: perhaps each would prefer to be with the other. Alternatively, the viewer could interpret the crosscutting as making an external comment, perhaps suggesting that the two belong together without their realizing it. In a stylistic choice typical of postwar modernism, the film invites the spectator to consider multiple meanings.

Such ambiguities had surfaced in the works of avant-gardists such as Luis Buñuel, Jean Cocteau, and Jean Epstein, but now they were absorbed by directors working in commercial feature production. These directors kept alive classical traditions, such as the tendency toward deep-space staging and deep-focus shooting (**16.7**, **16.8**).

Stella

16.5, 16.6 *Stella*: crosscutting suggests that the separated lovers are dancing with each other.

The Devil's General

16.7, *left* Deep space and deep focus in *The Devil's General* (West Germany, 1955, Helmut Käutner).

Justice est faite

16.8, *right* Hollywood-style depth in *Justice est faite* (France, 1954, André Cayatte).

Sometimes, however, the modernist film reworked classical devices to gain greater realism, subjective depth, narrational commentary, or ambiguity. Our example from *Stella* uses standard crosscutting in this way. Fantasies and dream sequences were common in mainstream cinema; the modernist filmmaker made them more prominent and sometimes even untrustworthy. Films such as *Le Jour se lève* and *Citizen Kane* had popularized flashback construction in the 1940s, so the modernist filmmaker could trust audiences to grasp complicated manipulations of time. Europeans' reliance on continuity editing remained constant, although directors such as Jacques Tati and Robert Bresson reworked the technique. The long take with camera movement was already common in Hollywood, but few Americans used it as systematically and intricately as Antonioni and Ophüls.

In all, the modernist cinema located itself between accessible entertainment cinema and the radical experimentation of the avant-garde. Often coproduced for a pan-European audience, films of this trend were seen in North America, Asia, and Latin America as well.

Several countries participated in the trend toward cinematic modernism. Italy was the most influential, so we devote most of what follows to it; we close the chapter by examining Spain as an example of Italian Neorealist influence. In the following chapter, we consider other countries that contributed to the European art cinema of the postwar era.

ITALY: NEOREALISM AND AFTER

The most important filmmaking trend of the era appeared in Italy between 1945 and 1951. Neorealism was not as original or as unified a movement as historians once thought, but it did create a distinct approach to fictional filmmaking. Moreover, this approach had an enormous influence on cinema in other countries.

Italian Spring

With the fall of Mussolini's government, the Italian film industry lost its organizational center. As in Germany, Allied military forces in Italy cooperated with the American companies in trying to secure US domination of the market. Most production firms became small-scale affairs. While domestic companies struggled, Neorealist cinema emerged as a force for cultural renewal and social change.

During the waning years of the Fascist regime, a realist impulse arose in literature and film (see A New Realism? p. 244). *Four Steps in the Clouds*, *The Children Are Watching Us*, *Ossessione*, and other films led some filmmakers to envision a new cinema. "We are convinced," wrote Giuseppe De Santis and Mario Alicata in 1941, "that one day we will create our most beautiful film following the slow and tired step of the worker who returns home."[1] Once Italy was liberated in the spring of 1945, people in all walks of life were eager to break with old ways. Parties formed a coalition government, aiming to make left-liberal ideas the basis of a reborn Italy. Filmmakers were ready to bear witness to what was called the "Italian Spring." The "new realism" imagined during the war years had arrived (see Neorealism and After: A Chronology of Events and Selected Works p. 316).

What made these films seem so realistic? Partly the contrast with many films that preceded them. Italian films had become known across Europe for their magnificent studio settings. But the government's Cinecittà studios had served as a refugee camp and could not host opulent productions. Filmmakers moved into the streets and the countryside. Because Italy had long mastered postsynchronization for dubbing foreign movies, crews shot on location and dubbed in dialogue later.

Another novelty was a critical examination of recent history. Neorealist films presented contemporary stories from a "popular front" perspective. For example, Roberto Rossellini's *Open City* (see *Open City*: The Death of Pina p. 321) derived its plot from events of the winter of 1943 to 1944. The main characters are caught up in the struggle against the German troops occupying Rome. Trust and

Neorealism and After: A Chronology of Events and Selected Works

1945
Spring: Mussolini is executed; Italy is liberated.
Open City, Roberto Rossellini

1946
June: Popular referendum carries liberal and left-wing parties to government power.
Paisan, Roberto Rossellini
Il Sole sorge ancora ("The Sun Always Rises"), Aldo Vergano
Vivere in pace ("To Live in Peace"), Luigi Zampa
Il Bandito ("The Bandit"), Alberto Lattuada
Shoeshine, Vittorio De Sica

1947
Germany Year Zero, Roberto Rossellini
Caccia tragica (*Fugitive*), Giuseppe De Santis
Senza pietà (*Without Pity*), Alberto Lattuada

1948
April: Moderate Christian Democratic party wins election.
La Terra trema ("The Earth Trembles"), Luchino Visconti
Bicycle Thieves, Vittorio De Sica
Bitter Rice, Giuseppe De Santis
Il Mulino del Po (*The Mill on the Po River*), Alberto Lattuada
La Macchina ammazzacattivi (*The Machine to Kill Bad People*), Roberto Rossellini
L'Amore (*Love;* episode-film consisting of *Una Voce umana* [*The Human Voice*] and *Il Miracolo* [*The Miracle*]), Roberto Rossellini

1949
December: Andreotti law establishes quotas and subsidies.
Stromboli, Roberto Rossellini

1950
Miracle in Milan, Vittorio De Sica
Francesco, giullare di Dio (*The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*), Roberto Rossellini
Cronaca di un amore (*Story of a Love Affair*), Michelangelo Antonioni
Luci del varietà (*Variety Lights*), Alberto Lattuada and Federico Fellini

1951
Umberto D., Vittorio De Sica
Roma ore 11 (*Rome 11 O'Clock*), Giuseppe De Santis
Bellissima ("The Most Beautiful"), Luchino Visconti
Europa 51, Roberto Rossellini

1952
The White Sheik, Federico Fellini
I Vinti (*The Vanquished*), Michelangelo Antonioni

1953
December: Conference on Neorealism is held in Parma.
L'amore in città (*Love in the City*), collective work overseen by Cesare Zavattini
I Vitelloni ("The Young Calves"), Federico Fellini
Stazione termini ("Final Station"), Vittorio De Sica
Signora senza camelie (*The Lady without the Camelias*), Michelangelo Antonioni
Pane, amore e fantasia (*Bread, Love, and Dreams*), Luigi Comencini

1954
Senso, Luchino Visconti
La Strada ("The Road"), Federico Fellini
Voyage to Italy, Roberto Rossellini

self-sacrifice link the sabotage agent Manfredi, his friend Francesco, Francesco's fiancée Pina, and the priest Don Pietro. The film portrays the Resistance as uniting Communists and Catholics with the populace.

Similarly, Rossellini's *Paisan* presents a kaleidoscopic vision of the Allied invasion of Italy. Its six episodes follow the American forces' movement from Sicily north to the Po valley. More fragmentary and documentary-like than *Open City*, *Paisan* focuses not only on the struggles between the Italian partisans and the occupying forces but also on the frictions, misunderstandings, and occasional affinities that arise between local communities and the

Yankee troops. Thematically, *Paisan* is as much about differences of language and culture as it is about the historical events it portrays.

Soon filmmakers turned from partisan heroics to contemporary social problems, such as party factionalism, inflation, and widespread unemployment. Few Neorealist films represent postwar suffering more vividly than Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*). This story of a worker whose livelihood depends on his bicycle shows the brutal rapacity of postwar life (**16.9**). Ricci turns to every institution—police, Church, labor union—but none can recover his stolen bicycle, and most are indifferent to his plight (**Video 16.1**). He and his son Bruno must wander the city in a futile search.

Against this social criticism *Bicycle Thieves* counterpoints the disintegration of trust between Ricci and Bruno. The film's climax comes when, in despair, Ricci tries to steal a bicycle himself. Bruno watches in shock. Their search has stripped away his illusions about his father. The film's scriptwriter, Cesare Zavattini, often expressed the desire to make a film that simply followed a man through ninety minutes in his life. *Bicycle Thieves* is not that film, but at the time it was seen as approaching Alicata and De Santis's ideal of following the worker's "slow and tired step."

Some films charted the problems of rural life. *Bitter Rice* depicts, somewhat sensationally, the exploitation of young women driven to low-wage farm work and herded into prisonlike dormitories. The best known of these regional works is Visconti's *La Terra trema* ("The Earth Trembles"). The film portrays the ill-fated rebellion of Sicilian fishermen against the marketers who exploit them.

16.9 *Bicycle Thieves*: Ricci and his wife prepare to pawn their sheets in order to reclaim his bicycle.

Like other films of the period, it expresses fading hopes for deep social change.

In 1948, the Italian Spring ended. Liberal and left-wing parties were defeated at the polls. The country was rebuilding. National income was starting to exceed prewar levels, and Italy was moving gradually into a modernizing European economy. The film industry began to export films, even to the United States.

Back in 1942, when Vittorio Mussolini, the head of the film industry, saw Visconti's *Ossessione*, he stormed out of the theater shouting, "This is not Italy!" Most Neorealist films elicited a similar reaction from postwar officials. The portrait of a desolate, poverty-stricken country outraged politicians anxious to prove that Italy was on the road to democracy and prosperity. The Catholic Church condemned many films for their anticlericalism and their portrayal of sex and working-class life. Leftists attacked the films for their pessimism and lack of explicit political commitment.

Open City, *Paisan*, *Bicycle Thieves*, and other Neorealist films were successful with local audiences at a time when Hollywood films were flooding into Italy. The state undersecretary in charge of entertainment, Giulio Andreotti, sought to slow the advance of American films while also curbing the embarrassing excesses of Neorealism. The so-called Andreotti law, which went into effect in 1949, not only established import limits and screen quotas but also provided loans to production firms. The loans, however, required a government committee to approve the script, and films with an apolitical slant received larger sums. Worse, a film could be denied an export license if it "slandered Italy."[2] The Andreotti law created preproduction censorship.

This move coincided with a general drift away from the "purer" Neorealism of the period from 1944 to 1948. Soon after the war, some filmmakers sought to acquire a Neorealist look by shooting traditional romances and melodramas in regions with picturesque local color. Other directors explored allegorical fantasy (as in De Sica's *Miracle in Milan* and Rossellini's *The Machine to Kill Bad People*) or historical spectacle (such as Visconti's *Senso*). There also emerged *rosy Neorealism*, films that melded working-class characters with 1930s-style populist comedy. Against this background, De Sica and Zavattini's *Umberto D.*, which depicted the lonely life of a retired man, could only strike officials as a dangerous throwback. The film begins with a scene of police breaking up a demonstration of old pensioners, and it ends with Umberto's aborted suicide attempt. In a public letter to De Sica, Andreotti castigated him for his "wretched service to his fatherland."[3]

Defining Neorealism

By the early 1950s, the Neorealist impulse had spent its force. At the 1953 Parma Congress on Neorealism, journalists and filmmakers began to discuss what the movement had been. There had been no Neorealist manifesto or program, only an appeal for greater realism and an emphasis on contemporary subjects and the life of the working class. Soon, however, several critical positions emerged.

One position treated Neorealism as committed reportage, calling for reform in the name of the political unity that had been briefly achieved during the Resistance and the Italian Spring. Another position emphasized the moral dimension of the films, suggesting that the movement's importance lay in its ability to make characters' personal problems gain universal significance.

According to a third position, Neorealism's documentary approach made the viewer aware of the beauty of ordinary life. Cesare Zavattini, De Sica's scriptwriter, was the most tireless advocate of a distinctive Neorealist aesthetic. Zavattini sought a cinema that presented the drama hidden in everyday events, such as buying shoes or looking for an apartment. It was his opinion that films should present events in all their repetitive ordinariness. An American producer told Zavattini that a Hollywood film would show a plane passing overhead, then machine-gun fire, then the plane falling out of the sky but that a Neorealist film would show the plane passing once, then again, then again. Zavattini replied, "It is not enough to have the plane pass by three times; it must pass by twenty times."[4] This ideal was seldom realized in Neorealist practice, but Zavattini's formulation allowed filmmakers and film theorists to imagine a radically "dedramatized" cinema that would be approached in the 1960s.

Several tendencies sometimes appeared in the same film. De Sica's *L'Oro di Napoli* (*The Gold of Naples*, 1954) tells six stories of city life. Two exemplify rosy Neorealism: the sexy wife of a pizza baker manages to hide her affair, and a penniless Count feeds his gambling habit by playing cards with a little boy (who always wins). Less comic segments aim at more universal appeals, as when a prostitute finds herself trapped in a loveless marriage, or when a family is tyrannized by the bully who has moved in with them. Political critique is present in the final story, which shows locals conspiring to deflate an arrogant plutocrat. Zavattini's ideal of ordinary action is represented by a simple sequence in which a mother accompanies her dead son's body to the cemetery (**16.10**).

Neorealist Form and Style Most historians of cinema find Neorealism influential not only for its political attitudes and its worldview but also for its innovations in film form. Many of these had precedents, but the international prestige of the Neorealist movement brought them to attention as never before.

The prototypical Neorealist film is often thought to be shot on location, using nonactors filmed in rough, offhand compositions. Actually, however, few Neorealist films display all these features. Most interior scenes are filmed in carefully lit studio sets (see 16.9). Sound is almost invariably postdubbed, which allows control after filming; the voice of the protagonist in *Bicycle Thieves* was supplied by another actor. Although in some films performers were nonprofessionals, more commonly nonactors mixed with such stars as Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi. In sum, Neorealism relies no less on artifice than do other film styles.

Moreover, the films are edited according to the norms of classical Hollywood style. While few Neorealist images are as self-consciously composed as those in *La Terra trema*, shots often aim to impress (**16.11**, **16.12**). Even

The Gold of Naples

16.10 *The Gold of Naples*: Without any backstory or dramatic climax, a mother follows a hearse through the streets. Soon she will scatter candy in the street for children to pick up.

La Terra trema

16.11 *La Terra trema*: Visconti's rich compositional use of seascape.

Il Mulino del Po

16.12 Neorealism as historical spectacle in *Il Mulino del Po*.

Bitter Rice

16.13 In *Bitter Rice*, the camera starts from a close-up of women's striding legs . . .

Bitter Rice

16.14 . . . and slowly cranes up to reveal the entire rice paddy.

Germany Year Zero

16.15 Edmund pauses in his wanderings when a bombed-out church emits organ music (*Germany Year Zero*).

when filmed on location, scenes contain smooth camera movements, crisp focus, and choreographed staging in several planes (**16.13**, **16.14**). The Neorealist film typically includes a sweeping musical score that recalls opera in its underlining of a scene's emotional development.

In its conception of storytelling, the Neorealist movement broke fresher ground. Sometimes the films rely extensively on coincidences, as when, in *Bicycle Thieves*, Ricci and Bruno happen to spot the thief near a house they have visited. Such plot developments, in rejecting the carefully motivated chain of events in classical cinema, can seem to reflect the chance encounters of daily life. Along with this tendency goes an unprecedented use of ellipsis. Neorealist films often skip over important causes for the events we see. In *Paisan*, the Germans' massacre of a farm family is revealed with startling suddenness. At one moment, the partisan guerrillas are in the field awaiting a plane, and, in the next scene, the guerrillas discover a baby crying beside his dead parents.

This loosening of plot linearity is perhaps most apparent in the films' unresolved endings. Halfway through *Open City*, Francesco escapes from the Fascists, but the plot does not return to him again. In *Bicycle Thieves*, Ricci and Bruno walk off into the crowd without a bicycle. How will the family keep going? The film does not tell us.

Neorealist films employ Hollywoodian deadlines, appointments, and "dialogue hooks" to connect scenes, but the result is likely to seem merely a string of events. Scene B is apt to follow scene A simply because B happened later, not because scene A made it happen. Most of *Bicycle Thieves* is organized around the search for the bicycle and traces the chronology of the day, from the morning through lunch to late afternoon.

Similarly episodic are the final sequences of Rossellini's third postwar film, *Germany Year Zero*. Edmund, the boy who exemplifies the moral confusions of defeated Germany, flees his family and wanders the streets of Berlin. The film's final fourteen minutes follow him through a single night and the following morning, concentrating on random events. Edmund watches a prostitute leave her client, plays hopscotch on the empty streets, scuffs through the rubble of buildings, tries to join other boys in a soccer game, and drifts around the city (**16.15**). From high in a shattered building, after he watches his grandfather's coffin carried out, he jumps to his death. While a suicide is a traditional conclusion to a story, Rossellini leads up to it by a string of everyday, accidentally glimpsed events.

Presented with a plot consisting of events that may not be causally connected, the viewer no longer knows which are the "big scenes" and which are simply filler material. Neorealist storytelling tends to flatten all events to the same level, playing down climaxes and dwelling on mundane locales or behaviors. The critic André Bazin wrote eloquently about how *Bicycle Thieves*' walk through Rome lets the viewer notice the difference between Ricci's and Bruno's gaits.[5] In *Umberto D.*, one scene is devoted to the maid waking up and starting her day's kitchen work; Bazin praised this for dwelling on trivial "microactions" that traditional cinema never shows us[6] (see *Umberto D.*: The Maid Wakes Up p. 320). This unorthodox approach to narrative construction enabled Neorealist filmmakers to draw the viewer's attention to the "irrelevant" details that constitute daily life.

Neorealism sought to embrace the ordinary world in all its varying moods. In *Paisan*, mildly comic or pathetic scenes alternate with scenes full of violence. Probably the most famous example of mixed tone in films of the period is the scene depicting the death of Pina in *Open City*. It reveals how a fairly orthodox film style can convey severe wrenches of emotional timbre (see *Open City*: The Death of Pina p. 321).

Neorealism's stylistic and narrative devices influenced the emergence of an international modernist cinema. Location shooting with postdubbing; the amalgam of actors and nonactors; plots based on chance encounters, ellipses,

UMBERTO D.: THE MAID WAKES UP

The sequence begins with the maid in bed, watching a cat walking across the roof. She rises and goes into the kitchen, where, after several tries, she lights the fire (**16.16**). (The wall bears the marks of many matches scratched there.) She looks out the window again and sees the cat walking on the roof; she looks out another window and then walks back to the kitchen. She goes to the cupboard, then to the table, and finally to the sink, where she sprays ants off the wall (**16.17**). She fills the coffeepot, walks around a bit more, and then returns to the stove, where she checks herself for signs of her pregnancy.

Going to the table, she sits and starts to weep as she grinds the morning coffee (**16.18**). As she grinds, she stretches out her foot to shut the door (**16.19**). Then she sits up, wipes her eyes, and rises to take the coffee to her mistress.

As is often the case with Neorealist films, the realistic details play a narrative role. Bazin rightly praises the sequence for presenting the maid's life in all its "dailiness," but we should also note that a degree of drama is inserted as well. The maid has just discovered that she is pregnant. The force of the scene derives from the tension between her drab routine and her numb anxiety about her future.

Umberto D

16.16–16.19 (*Umberto D.*)

OPEN CITY: THE DEATH OF PINA

Rossellini starts the scene at a pitch of suspense when German soldiers cordon off a block of apartments and begin searching for underground partisans. Don Pietro and Marcello claim to be visiting a dying man. They hide the partisans' munitions in the old man's bed, a ploy that triggers farcical comedy when the old man refuses to pretend to be dying (**16.20**).

The tone shifts again when Pina sees that the Germans have captured her fiancé, Francesco, and are marching him toward their trucks. She breaks free from the guards and runs after his departing truck (**16.21**, **16.22**). Don Pietro, watching in horror, presses Marcello's face into his cassock. Francesco shouts, "Hold her back!" (**16.23**). Suddenly there is a burst of machine-gun fire. In the next shot, from Francesco's viewpoint, Pina is hit and falls (**16.24**). Grim music starts. The last four shots of the scene, taken in newsreel fashion with long lenses, show Marcello and Don Pietro running to the dead woman and kneeling by her (**16.25**, **Video 16.2**).

The clarity of Rossellini's style allows him to drive home some unsettling narrative qualities. In a more classical film, Francesco would see who killed Pina and would spend the rest of the film seeking revenge. But here Pina is cut down by an anonymous burst of fire, and the killer's identity is never revealed. In addition, the emotional tone switches abruptly, from suspense to comedy to suspense and finally to shock and sorrow. Even more disturbing, Pina has been established as the film's heroine, and her sudden death constitutes a shock for which few viewers in 1945 would have been prepared. Like the death of André Jurieu in Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game*, Pina's murder suggests that in real life—as opposed to the movies—good people may die pointlessly.

Open City

16.20 *Open City*: to make the old man seem to be dying, Don Pietro has knocked him unconscious with a frying pan.

Open City

16.21 Pina breaks free from the guards . . .

Open City

16.22 . . . and runs after Francesco; she is seen from his viewpoint on the truck.

Open City

16.23 In a reverse shot, Francesco calls out . . .

Open City

16.24 . . . just before Pina is shot.

Open City

16.25 Don Pietro and Marcello grieve over Pina's body.

LUCHINO VISCONTI AND ROBERTO ROSSELLINI

The two major directors to emerge from Neorealism were nearly contemporaries. Both grew up in wealthy households, took up film as an amateur pastime, and launched their professional filmmaking under the auspices of Mussolini's Fascism. Both men led unorthodox personal lives, Visconti acknowledging his homosexuality and Rossellini getting involved with a number of women (most notably Ingrid Bergman, who bore him a daughter, Isabella, outside marriage).

The aristocrat Visconti became interested in film through assisting Jean Renoir in filming *A Day in the Country* (1936). Visconti took up left-wing causes, and during the war he was drawn into partisan work. His first film, *Ossessione*, played a key part in the realist revival during the last years of Fascist cinema. "The term 'neo-realism,'" he declared, "was born with *Ossessione*."[9] *La Terra trema* started out as a vehicle for the Communist party, but Visconti financed it from his personal fortune.

Visconti also worked in opera, and his films flaunted sumptuous costumes and settings, florid acting, and overpowering music. *Senso* opens at a performance of *Il Trovatore* and uses Giuseppe Verdi's music throughout. *The Damned* (1969) was originally to be called *Götterdammerung*, in order to compare the moral decay of Germany under Hitler with Richard Wagner's opera *Twilight of the Gods*. Throughout, the use of color exaggerates the slide from tradition to decadence (**Color Plate 16.1**). Visconti's film version of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1971) models its hero on Gustav Mahler, and *Ludwig* (1973) makes Wagner a major character. Visconti aimed for intense emotion: "I love melodrama because it is situated right on the border between life and the theater."[10]

La Terra trema, *Senso*, *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960), *The Leopard* (1963), *The Damned*, *Ludwig*, and *Conversation Piece* (1974) all trace the decline of a family in a period of drastic historical upheaval. Visconti evokes not only the lifestyles of the rich, but he also usually reveals the class conflict behind those lifestyles. Foreign powers conspire with the ruling class to oppress the populace (*Senso*); the aristocrats must give way to democracy (*The Leopard*); a bourgeoisie collapses through its own corruption (*The Damned*).

More and more, Visconti relied on a languid, pan-and-zoom shooting style, as if history were a vast stage production and the director were guiding the spectator's opera glasses slowly over its details. As the von Essenbeck family in *The Damned* listen to a Bach sonata, the camera drifts slowly from one face to another, studying the bourgeois self-absorption that the Nazis will exploit. In *Death in Venice*, the camera scans for the boy Tadzio among the pillars, ferns, and silver tea trays of the luxurious hotel.

open endings, and microactions; and extreme mixtures of tone—all these strategies would be adopted and developed by filmmakers into the twenty-first century.

Beyond Neorealism

Apart from works like *Umberto D.*, rosy Neorealism was the dominant form the movement took in the early 1950s. The huge success of Luigi Comencini's *Pane, amore e fantasia* (*Bread, Love, and Dreams*, 1953) led to a string of imitations that continued well into the 1960s. Rosy Neorealism retained some use of locations and nonprofessional actors, and it occasionally took on social problems, but it absorbed Neorealism into the robust tradition of Italian comedy. As economic recovery continued to move Italy toward greater prosperity, audiences did not welcome Neorealism's focus on poverty and suffering.

Moreover, the domestic film industry was becoming more oriented to an international market. Hundreds of American films were successfully released in Italy in the late 1940s, and the Italian government froze US profits within the country. This encouraged Hollywood studios to reinvest the money in Italian film production, distribution, and exhibition. Italy also sustained American runaway productions, supplying casts and crews.

Many traditional genres proved exportable. Blasetti's hugely lucrative *Fabiola* (1948) revived the lavish costume picture. Audiences in Europe and America developed a taste for *peplum*, musclemen sagas such as *Ulysses* (1954) and *Revolt of the Gladiators* (1958). Also successful was the *commedia all'italiana* featuring veteran comic stars such as Vittorio De Sica and Totò, along with such postwar arrivals as Sophia Loren, Vittorio Gassman, Alberto Sordi, and Marcello Mastroianni. Among the most successful films were *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (1956) and *Divorce Italian Style* (1961). Carlo Ponti and Dino de Laurentiis led a new generation of producers who set their sights beyond the Italian border and turned the rebuilt Cinecittà studios into a film factory.

Other filmmakers moved toward more intimate psychological portrayal, focusing on how social circumstances

Rossellini, by contrast, opposed spectacle. "If I mistakenly make a beautiful shot," he once remarked, "I cut it out."[11] His direct approach matched his straightforward faith in rudimentary values. *Open City* turns the partisans into Christlike martyrs, and *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* shows the childlike joy of Christian charity. At the film's end, Francesco instructs his followers to whirl around until they fall to the ground. Rossellini sometimes advocates a more secular humanism that praises fantasy and imagination (*The Machine to Kill Bad People*), devotion to good works (*Europa 51*), and acceptance of imperfect love (*Voyage to Italy*). Later, he celebrates the great artists, inventors, and philosophers of the Western world (*Socrates*, 1970; *Blaise Pascal*, 1972; *The Age of the Medici*, 1972; *Descartes*, 1974).

However forthright Rossellini's message may have been, his manner of treatment repeatedly led him into modernist ambiguities. His penchant for mixed tone, episodic narratives, ellipses, and open endings often makes the films more evocative than their straightforward themes might suggest. By comparison with Visconti's elegance, Rossellini's style seems awkward. But his simplest effects, in context, often yield complex results, as in his use of *temps morts*, "dead time." Rossellini punctuates his stories with empty intervals of characters simply sitting or walking or thinking. The spectator must infer the characters' attitudes. In *Voyage to Italy*, Katherine pretends to be asleep when her husband returns from Capri, and Rossellini suggests a welter of emotions merely by intercutting shots of each partner.

Like Visconti, Rossellini also came to rely on a pan-and-zoom style after the early 1960s. But Visconti's scanning frame unrolls an endless spectacle, while Rossellini uses the pan-and-zoom for its simplicity and cheapness and for its ability to present the action neutrally, freeing us from any character's consciousness **(Color Plate 16.2)**.

In the last fifteen years of his life, Rossellini launched a series of television films that would introduce the great figures and forces in history. This vast enterprise brought forth *La Prise du pouvoir par Louis XIV* (*The Rise to Power of Louis XIV*, 1966), the Pascal and Medici films, *The Messiah* (1975), and other works. As costume dramas, these films are remarkably unspectacular. Full of talk and dominated by static long takes, they dwell on daily life in each era. Whereas Visconti imagines history as a vast opera, Rossellini dedramatizes it.

Visconti became a model for other Italian directors of an operatic turn, such as Franco Zeffirelli, Francesco Rosi, and Liliana Cavani. Rossellini's version of cinematic modernism, in the name of realism, humanism, and education, centrally influenced the new generation of the 1960s. "Here is our cinema," wrote Jacques Rivette, "those of us who are in our turn preparing to make films (did I tell you, it may be soon)."[12]

affected the personal relations among individuals. Michelangelo Antonioni, one of the major directors of the period, noted,

> It no longer seems to me important to make a film about a man who has had his bicycle stolen . . . . Now that we have eliminated the problem of the bicycle (I am speaking metaphorically), it is important to see what there is in the mind and in the heart of this man who has had his bicycle stolen, how he has adapted himself, what remains in him of his past experience, of the war, of the period after the war, of everything which has happened to him in our country.[7]

An interest in the psychological effects of war and recovery marks the early 1950s work of both Rossellini and Antonioni. Each director reveals how individuals' lives are altered by a milieu of postwar confusion.

After Rossellini's "war trilogy" of *Open City*, *Paisan*, and *Germany Year Zero*, his filmmaking attempted to revivify humanism in what he perceived as a decaying society. "We live," he once asserted, "in a world that is scarcely human—in fear and anguish. Humankind drinks whiskey to arouse itself, then takes tranquilizers to calm down."[8] He saw himself as continuing the Neorealist project by bringing people to an awareness of the demands of spiritual truth, self-knowledge, and obligation to others. Rossellini's films became highly didactic, showing how the practical world mistakes sensitive individuals for simpletons, heretics, or lunatics. In *The Miracle*, he presents the story of a bewildered goatherd who believes she is pregnant with a holy child. She is cast out by the villagers and must go into the mountains to bear the child alone. In *Francesco, giullare de Dio* ("Francesco, God's Juggler," aka *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*), Saint Francis of Assisi and his scampering, childlike disciples become models of gentleness and charity in a corrupt world (see Luchino Visconti and Roberto Rossellini box).

In his films starring Ingrid Bergman, Rossellini presents a woman's gradual discovery of moral awareness. A selfish and calculating war refugee comes to quiet acceptance of her husband's love after a mystical experience on

the edge of a volcano (*Stromboli*). A mother shattered by her son's suicide devotes her life to relieving the suffering of others; her charity can only seem mad, and she winds up imprisoned in an asylum (*Europa 51*). And an emotionally numb woman finds Italy frighteningly alive, even in its catacombs. Only after the accidental passing of a religious procession does she—perhaps—begin to love her husband once more (*Voyage to Italy*).

Rossellini concentrates on the extraordinary person who can rediscover time-honored values in the postwar world. By contrast, Antonioni's films focus on how ambition and class mobility make individuals lose their moral sensitivity. In *Story of a Love Affair*, for example, the heroine and hero accidentally caused the death of a friend years ago. Now, she is the wife of a wealthy industrialist, while he is an itinerant car salesman. Her husband's curiosity about her past leads him to hire a detective, and eventually his investigation reunites the former lovers. As their passion takes hold once more, they plot to murder the husband (**Video 16.3**).

Narratively, many Italian art films of the early 1950s draw on such Neorealist conventions as ellipses and open endings. In particular, the focus on individuals' psychological states led Rossellini and Antonioni toward a dedramatized approach derived from Neorealism's concentration on mundane events. Now a film's plot might mix scenes of banal conversation with scenes showing the characters reacting to their environment or simply walking or driving through a landscape.

The canonical example of the dedramatized tale is Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy*, in which the bickerings between Katherine and her husband alternate with scenes of her excursions to tourist sights around their villa. The excursion episodes suggest her romantic yearnings, her uncertainty about the role of physical pleasure, and her wish for a child (**16.26**), and she gradually recognizes the sterility of her marriage. *Voyage to Italy* pointed toward a filmmaking that would build scenes not around an intricate plot but around episodes in which casual, "undramatic" incidents would reveal characters' passing moods and barely articulated problems. The museum scene in *Voyage to Italy* is notable for its lengthy camera movements, and in this respect, it is characteristic of a stylistic development in Italian films of the early 1950s. More and more, directors used slowly paced tracking shots to explore characters' relations within a concrete environment.

After the early 1950s, much of Italian "quality" cinema would center on individual problems. Instead of documenting a historical moment by depicting group struggles, filmmakers probed middle-class and upper-class characters for the psychological effects of contemporary life.

Voyage to Italy

16.26 The celebrated museum scene of *Voyage to Italy*: Katherine comes face-to-face with the striking physicality of ancient statuary.

Alternatively, the filmmaker might treat middle and lower classes in a rather poetic way, as Federico Fellini did in a series of films beginning with *Variety Lights* (1950, codirected with Alberto Lattuada). In Fellini's works of the 1950s, Neorealistic subject matter is given a lyrical, almost mystical, treatment. *La Strada* ("The Road," 1954), Fellini's tale of victimized innocence, has the simplicity of a parable. The itinerant entertainers Zampanò and Gelsomina live in the grim countryside, but occasionally this realm overlaps with a more mysterious one (**16.27**). Marxist critics attacked Fellini for deviating from Neorealism, but he claimed that he remained true to its spirit of "sincerity."[13] In any event, Fellini's work, no less than that of Rossellini and Antonioni, turned Italian filmmaking from the verisimilitude of Neorealism toward a cinema of

La Strada

16.27 *La Strada*: as Gelsomina sits by the roadside, a carnival band strolls out of nowhere.

imagination and ambiguity. (For discussions of the careers of Fellini and Antonioni, see Chapter 19.)

A SPANISH NEOREALISM?

Spain offers an illuminating case study of the powerful influence of Italian Neorealism. At first glance, no country could have seemed more inhospitable to the Neorealist impulse. Once Francisco Franco's forces won the civil war in 1939, he established a Fascist dictatorship. After World War II, Spain gradually reentered the world community, but it remained an authoritarian country until the mid-1970s.

The film industry was controlled by a government ministry that censored scripts before filming, required dubbing of all films into the "official" Castilian dialect, and created a state monopoly on newsreels and documentaries. The regime demanded pious, chauvinistic films. The result was a procession of civil war dramas (*cine cruzada*), historical epics, religious films, and literary adaptations (including a *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, 1947, that compared the idealistic hero to Franco). At a less prestigious level, the industry turned out popular musicals, comedies, and bullfight films. The domestic industry also furnished locales for coproductions and runaway projects.

In the early 1950s, however, countercurrents emerged. The biggest production company of the 1940s overinvested in high-budget productions and collapsed. As a reaction to the superproduction approach, several low-budget films, most notably *Furrows* (1951), began to treat social problems, and some used location filming and nonprofessional actors in the Neorealist manner. At the film school IIEC (founded in 1947), students were able to see foreign films that were banned from public exhibition. In 1951, during an Italian film week, IIEC students viewed *Bicycle Thieves*, *Miracle in Milan*, *Open City*, *Paisan*, and *Story of a Love Affair*. Soon afterward, several IIEC graduates founded a journal, *Objetivo*, that discussed Neorealist ideas.

The immediate effect of Neorealism is most evident in the work of the two best-known Spanish directors to emerge in the 1950s, Luis Garcia Berlanga and Juan Antonio Bardem. "B & B," as they came to be known, had been in the first graduating class of IIEC, and in the early 1950s they collaborated on several projects. *Welcome, Mr. Marshall* (1951), scripted by Bardem and directed by Berlanga, is a comic fable reminiscent of De Sica's *Miracle in Milan*. A small town transforms itself into a picturesque stereotype in order to benefit from the Marshall Plan (**16.28**).

Welcome, Mr. Marshall!

16.28 The schoolteacher holds classes on how to dress and act like the clichéd Spaniard in *Welcome, Mr. Marshall*.

Enormously popular in Spain, *Welcome, Mr. Marshall* satirized America's expanding power, took jabs at Hollywood movies and Spanish folk genres, and made a quiet appeal for popular unity. It set the tone for later Berlanga films such as *Calabuch* (1956), which mocked the arms race, and it promulgated what came to be called *la estética franquista* ("the Franco aesthetic"), a sardonic or an ironic treatment of apparently safe subjects.

Welcome, Mr. Marshall was selected as Spain's entry to the Cannes Film Festival, and, despite controversy about its "anti-American" outlook, it won a special mention. The film allowed Bardem to move from screenwriting to directing. He found international success with *Death of a Cyclist* (1955), which won the best-film prize at Cannes, and *Calle Mayor* (*Main Street*, 1956), which won the Critics' Prize at Venice.

Berlanga blended Neorealist impulses toward regional realism with a penchant for sardonic comedy. Bardem, by contrast, favored a more somber scrutiny of psychological states. *Calle Mayor*, a fierce indictment of small-town narrowness and masculine egotism, recalls *I Vitelloni*, but without Fellini's indulgent humor (**16.29**). Similarly, *Death of a Cyclist* derives to some extent from *Story of a Love Affair*; it even features Lucia Bose, the star of Antonioni's film. Bardem's plot shows how an affair between a rich man's wife and a university professor is shattered when their car kills a passing bicyclist. Bardem's editing creates narrational commentary on the affair, and the deep-focus landscape shots recall Antonioni's (**16.30**; compare 16.4).

As the work of Berlanga, Bardem, and others gained international attention, an alternative Spanish film culture began to surface. The growth of ciné-clubs in various

Calle Mayor

16.29 Young wastrels in a small town (*Calle Mayor*).

Death of a Cyclist

16.30 Antonioni-style alienation and anomie in *Death of a Cyclist*.

universities led to a conference at Salamanca in 1955. This event assembled filmmakers, critics, and scholars to discuss the future of the nation's cinema. Bardem denounced Spanish film as "politically, useless; socially, false; intellectually, inferior; aesthetically, nonexistent; and industrially, sick."[14] After Bardem's denunciation, he was arrested while filming *Calle Mayor* and was released only after international protests.

The Salamanca talks did not sway the industry but did encourage filmmakers to test the limits of government policy. Such resistance was helped by the production company UNINCI, founded in 1951 and responsible for *Welcome, Mr. Marshall*. In 1957, Bardem joined UNINCI's board of directors and soon persuaded Luis Buñuel to return to Spain to make a film. The government welcomed Buñuel's return, and his script was accepted with only one change (which Buñuel claimed was an improvement). *Viridiana* (1961) won the highest award at the Cannes festival, but when Church officials declared it blasphemous, the government banned this most famous Spanish postwar film. UNINCI dissolved. The rebellion of young filmmakers and critics had gone too far, and the experiment in Spanish Neorealism was over.

Spanish directors were not alone in feeling the impact of Neorealism. *Bicycle Thieves*, *Open City*, and other films left a rich legacy. In the chapters to come, we'll often encounter filmmakers building upon Neorealism, probing social and psychological reality and creating modern conventions of story and style.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 16.
2. Quoted in Mira Liehm, *Passion and Defiance: Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 91.
3. Quoted in Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, p. 26.
4. Ibid., p. 70.
5. André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* vol. 2, trans. and ed. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 54–55.
6. Ibid., pp. 81–82.
7. Quoted in Pierre Leprohon, *Michelangelo Antonioni: An Introduction* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), pp. 89–90.
8. Quoted in Mario Verdone, *Roberto Rossellini* (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1963), p. 89.
9. Quoted in Gaia Servadio, *Luchino Visconti: A Biography* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), p. 78.
10. Quoted in Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, p. 183.
11. Quoted in Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 14.
12. Jacques Rivette, "Letter on Rossellini," in Jim Hillier, ed., Cahiers du Cinéma: *The 1950s: Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 203.
13. Federico Fellini, "My Experiences as a Director," in Peter Bondanella, ed., *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 4.
14. Quoted in Virginia Higginbotham, *Spanish Film under Franco* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), p. 28.

Sous le ciel de Paris

CHAPTER 17

POSTWAR EUROPEAN CINEMA: FRANCE, SCANDINAVIA, AND BRITAIN, 1945–1959

Les Portes de la nuit

Italian Neorealism provided an influential model of social realism and psychological ambiguity, but it was not the only major trend in Europe during the postwar era. France achieved recognition for its prestigious "Tradition of Quality," the return of several important prewar directors, and the emergence of modernist experimenters. Scandinavian offshoots of theatrical tradition helped shape emerging art-cinema conventions. British filmmaking, less inclined to experiment, concentrated on prestigious literary adaptations, crime thrillers, and comedies. Coproductions, export, and festivals helped all these films find international audiences.

FRENCH CINEMA OF THE POSTWAR DECADE

The Industry Recovers

Before the Nazi Occupation, France's production sector consisted of many small firms, often created solely to make one film. Even Pathé and Gaumont, the major vertically integrated companies, produced few films themselves. They rented studio facilities to other firms and served as distributors and exhibitors. Under the Nazis, however, production was centralized (see The German Cinema Under the Nazis p. 236).

After the Liberation in 1944, free-for-all competition reemerged. Pathé and Gaumont, while occasionally producing big-budget films, could not satisfy the market. Filmmakers were forced back to the "artisanal" system of finding smaller production companies or individual producers. In 1947, there were more than 200 registered firms. Nearly all had little capital, and banks were reluctant to finance their projects.

POSTWAR FRENCH FILM CULTURE

Since World War I, French intellectuals took a keen interest in cinema (see Chapter 5). After 1945, their enthusiasm, constrained by the war, burst out anew. The German Occupation had denied them American movies for five years, but now in a single month they might see *Citizen Kane*, *Double Indemnity*, *The Little Foxes*, and *The Maltese Falcon.* The Cinémathèque Française, which had gone underground during the war, began regularly showing older films from around the world. As students gathered in Parisian cafés and lecture halls to argue about Marxism, existentialism, and phenomenology, so too did they flock to movie theaters and spend hours talking and writing about films.

The atmosphere of *cinéphilie* ("love of cinema") must have been heady. The ciné-club movement was revived, and by 1954 there were 200 clubs with approximately 100,000 members. The Catholic Church's lay group on public education formed an agency that arranged screenings for millions of viewers. University courses began to teach cinema, and an academic discipline called "filmology" was developed. Several film journals were launched, most notably *L'Écran français* (published secretly during the Occupation, openly beginning in 1945), *La Revue du cinéma* (founded 1946), *Cahiers du cinéma* (1951), and *Positif* (1952). Soon after the war's end, publishers brought out film histories by Georges Sadoul and theoretical works by André Bazin, Jean Epstein, André Malraux, and Claude-Edmonde Magny.

Certain issues came to the fore. One, central to all thinking about film since the early years, was the question of cinema as an art. Some critics argued that film was analogous to theater; others suggested that it had more in common with the novel. At the same time, many critics proposed fresh ways to think about film style and technique. Bazin, for instance, responded to the revelation of wartime Hollywood films by closely examining the aesthetic potential of deep focus and long takes. Such discussions led to more abstract speculation too. Film theory, as an inquiry into the nature and functions of cinema, was revived in this philosophical milieu.

Postwar French film culture has long served as the paradigm of intellectual ferment around cinema. The ideas explored by several brilliant thinkers have permanently shaped film studies and filmmaking. Out of the debates in ciné-clubs, the screenings of esoteric classics and recent Hollywood products, and the articles in *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Positif*, the New Wave of the 1950s would be born.

Production problems were intensified by government indifference. In May 1946, Prime Minister Léon Blum and US Secretary of State James Byrnes signed an agreement to eliminate prewar quotas on American films. The pact guaranteed that exhibitors would reserve sixteen weeks per year for French films; the rest of the year would be given over to "free competition." Although the Blum-Byrnes accord was defended as a way to encourage production, film workers protested that it actually made France an open market for American films. Immediate results bore out their charge: a year after the accord, the number of imported American films increased tenfold, and French output dropped. With double bills outlawed and with Hollywood companies making deep inroads in other countries that had welcomed French films, there were fewer outlets for the domestic product.

Two government measures responded to the outrage in the industry. In late 1946, the French government established the Centre National de la Cinématographie (CNC, "National Cinema Center"). This agency began to regulate the industry by establishing standards for financial solvency, providing subsidies for filmmaking, and encouraging documentary and artistic efforts. In effect, CNC was a revision of the centralized organization of production under the Vichy regime. By 1949, the agency was regularly subsidizing production. In the same year, it founded Unifrance Film, a publicity agency aimed at promoting French film abroad and coordinating the nation's festival entries. The CNC was part of a broader effort toward centralized economic planning, which included nationalization of banks, utilities, and transportation industries.

The government took a second step by enacting protectionist legislation. A 1948 law set a new import quota of 121 American films per year, a figure that remained roughly constant over the next decade. The same law provided for major bank loans to stable companies. The legislation also created an admission tax earmarked for financing future productions. If a film proved successful, ticket surcharges would build up a large fund that would assist the producer in financing his next project. This

policy encouraged firms to make popular films with presold stars and stories. A 1953 revision in the law created a development fund for new projects and included a provision for the encouragement of short films.

Such assistance helped feature output rise to about 120 films per year. Although the industry never regained the international power it had enjoyed before World War I, it was fairly healthy. Television had not yet penetrated France, and moviegoing remained popular. Although the three major companies—Pathé, Gaumont, and Union Générale Cinématographique—owned or had contracts with the best first-run theaters, their production output dwindled; Pathé gave up film production altogether and arranged with Gaumont to supply its theaters. The larger production houses were able to fill exhibitors' demands, in the process becoming strong distributors. The national film school, Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques (IDHEC), founded in 1943, trained technicians for industry positions. Coproductions, especially with Italian companies, flourished under the coordination of the CNC.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, international audiences enjoyed French police thrillers, comedies, costume dramas, and star vehicles. The major stars—Gérard Philipe, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Fernandel, Simone Signoret, Martine Carol, and Michèle Morgan—gained fame around the world. And France, along with Italy, soon became a vanguard for the era's emerging modernist currents. The audience's interest in cinema as a part of artistic culture (see Postwar French Film Culture), along with the relatively artisanal condition of smaller production companies, enabled some writers and directors to experiment with film form and style.

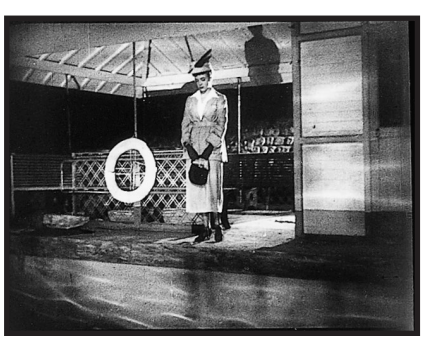
The Tradition of Quality

The first decade of the postwar French cinema was dominated by what a critic dubbed in 1953 the "Tradition of Quality" (also known as the "Cinema of Quality"). Originally the term was quite broad, but it was soon identified with particular directors and screenwriters.

The Tradition of Quality aimed to be a prestige cinema. It relied heavily on adaptations of literary classics. Often the scriptwriter was considered the creative equal or even the superior of the director. Performers were drawn from the ranks of top-flight stars or from leading theaters. The films were often steeped in romanticism, particularly of the sort made famous by Poetic Realism before the war (see Poetic Realism p. 252). The plots tend to put lovers in an unfeeling or threatening social environment; most often, their affairs end tragically. The woman is persistently idealized, treated as mysterious and unattainable (**17.1, 17.2**). Stylistically, much of the Tradition of Quality resembles the A-picture romantic dramas of Hollywood and British cinema, such as *Arch of Triumph* (1948) and *Brief Encounter* (1945). All the resources of studio filmmaking—lavish sets, special effects, elaborate lighting, and extravagant costumes—were used to amplify these refined tales of passion and melancholy.

In certain ways, the Cinema of Quality prolonged conventions developed under the Occupation. The French had perfected a literary, studio-bound romanticism that culminated in the Marcel Carné–Jacques Prévert collaboration *Children of Paradise* (see Films of the Occupation Period). Among the most famous films in the canon of Quality is the first postwar Carné-Prévert project *Les Portes de la nuit* ("Gates of the Night," 1946). In this allegory, a young couple flee the black marketer who has kept the woman as his mistress. In the course of the night, they encounter the figure of Destiny, a tramp who continually warns them of their fate. A hugely expensive film, featuring colossal street sets (**17.3**) and a fabricated waterfront, *Les Portes de la nuit* was a financial failure. Carné and Prévert did not collaborate on a project again, but Carné persisted in his efforts to create a symbolic cinema, notably in *Juliette ou la clef des songes* ("Juliette, or the Key of Dreams," 1951).

Symphonie pastorale



Le Diable au corps

17.1, *left* Many films in the Tradition of Quality dwell on the moment when the male protagonist is captivated by a woman's distant image (*Symphonie pastorale*).

17.2, *right* *Le Diable au corps*: at night a woman waits for her lover at dockside, and the camera glides toward her while reflections of waves play across her body.

Les Portes de la nuit

17.3 A studio set for *Les Portes de la nuit*; like *Children of Paradise*, the film was designed by Alexander Trauner.

More successful was the scriptwriting team of Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost. After working under the Occupation, they rose quickly in the postwar period, turning out adaptations of literary classics. Aurenche and Bost became the prototypical scenarists of the Tradition of Quality. Their *Symphonie pastorale* ("Pastoral Symphony," 1946), an adaptation of André Gide's novel, plays up the fateful attraction of a father and son for the same blind girl. *Le Diable au corps* ("Devil in the Flesh," 1947) uses flashbacks to tell another story of lost adolescent love: while crowds joyously celebrate the end of World War I, the teenager François recalls his affair with Marthe, a soldier's fiancée. *Le Diable au corps* solidified the reputation of its star, Gérard Philipe, and gave director Claude Autant-Lara his first postwar success. Aurenche and Bost were to collaborate frequently with Autant-Lara.

Aurenche and Bost's most famous film outside France was *Jeux interdits* (*Forbidden Games*, 1952), directed by René Clement. Here two children substitute for the romantic couple. During World War II, a farm family takes in an orphaned refugee girl. She and the family's youngest son begin to collect dead animals and bury them in elaborate graves (**17.4**). The film has a touch of Luis Buñuel in the way that the children's morbid rituals unwittingly satirize the church's own death obsession. On the whole, however, Aurenche and Bost lyricize their subject, contrasting rivalries among peasant families with the children's devotion to each other and to the peace of death.

The Tradition of Quality encompassed other scriptwriter-director teams. One of the most notable was formed by Charles Spaak, who had written many of the most famous films of the 1930s, and André Cayatte, a lawyer who began making social-problem films in the 1950s. Like other products of the Quality tradition, the Cayatte-Spaak films, such as *Justice est faite* ("Justice Is Done," 1950) and *Nous sommes tous des assassins* ("We Are All Killers," 1952), are polished studio-bound projects; but, in harshly criticizing the French judicial system, they avoid the usual romanticism and take a didactic, even preachy, attitude.

Forbidden Games

17.4 Morbid rituals in *Forbidden Games*.

Most of the Tradition of Quality directors were young men whose careers began after the coming of sound, usually during the Occupation. Somewhat detached from them was their contemporary Henri-Georges Clouzot, who had achieved notoriety with *Le Corbeau* ("The Crow," 1943; see Films of the Occupation Period p. 262). Clouzot gained international fame by specializing in mordant suspense films such as *Quai des orfèvres* (1957), *The Wages of Fear* (1953), and *Les Diaboliques* (*Diabolique*, 1955). Clouzot, like the director-writer teams, continued the tradition of tightly scripted, fatalistic romances and thrillers associated with the French cinema of the 1930s and 1940s.

Sous le ciel de Paris

17.5 A tormented sculptor who turns to homicide is one of many Parisians whose paths cross in *Sous le ciel de Paris*.

Le Silence est d'or

17.6 Chevalier directs in *Le Silence est d'or*, Clair's tribute to silent film.

Les Grands manoeuvres

17.7 A ballroom scene in *Les Grands manoeuvres* (1955), with a dancing couple seen in a white iris (a round mask) created by the view through a rolled-up newspaper.

The Return of Older Directors

While young directors were achieving prominence, much older men such as Marcel L'Herbier, Abel Gance, and Jean Epstein continued their work in film. With the possible exception of Epstein's *Le Tempestaire* ("Master of the Winds," 1947), however, no films by these directors had much impact on the course of French cinema. More influential was a middle generation of directors who had begun their careers in the 1920s and 1930s. Julien Duvivier, René Clair, Max Ophüls, Jean Renoir, and others had fled to Hollywood, but, after the war ended, they returned to France.

Julien Duvivier had been a major director of the silent era and Poetic Realism (see Poetic Realism p. 252). Back in France, he showed himself adept at thrillers (*Panique*, 1946; *Deadlier than the Male*, 1956) and comedies (*The Little World of Don Camillo*, 1951). He sought out narrative experiments as well. *Sous le ciel de Paris* ("Under the Skies of Paris," 1951) traces several characters' personal dramas across a single day (**17.5**). Similarly, *Marie-Octobre* (1959) confines itself to one night, as former resistance fighters gather to expose one of their group as a traitor. In *Holiday for Henrietta* (1952), scriptwriters quarrel over a plot for their next film, with the alternative scenes dramatized for us. Although some young critics judged him too conformist, Duvivier's continued ingenuity and versatility led later generations to admire him as an emblem of the classic French tradition.

Other exiled directors reestablished their reputations. They offered an alternative to the Tradition of Quality—that of the veteran director not beholden to screenwriters but to a trusted cadre of assistants and technicians who could enable him to express his own personality.

René Clair, for example, returned from a mildly successful stay in England and Hollywood to direct seven features. He established continuity with his native tradition with *Le Silence est d'or* ("Silence Is Golden," 1947). Maurice Chevalier plays a turn-of-the-century film producer-director who oversees a love affair (**17.6**). Later films continued Clair's work in light comedy, but several were dramas in keeping with prevailing Cinema of Quality tastes. Throughout, Clair retained some of the playful exuberance of his early works, often paying homage to silent cinema (**17.7**).

Max Ophüls directed four films in Hollywood before returning to Paris, where he had worked a decade earlier. He renewed his career with four films: *La Ronde* (1950), *Le Plaisir* (1952), *Madame de . . .* (*The Earrings of Madame de . . .*, 1953), and *Lola Montès* (1955). For each film, Ophüls called upon virtually the same collaborators: scriptwriter Jacques Natanson, cinematographer Christian Matras, costume designer Georges Annenkov, and set designer Jean d'Eaubonne. All four films were literary adaptations set in picturesque locales and periods; they featured international stars, gorgeous sets, appealing music, and extravagant costumes.

Yet these were not ordinary prestige pictures. *La Ronde* aroused controversy for its casual treatment of promiscuity, and *Lola Montès* provoked a storm of attacks that led several prominent directors to sign a public letter defending it. Refusing to moralize or preach, Ophüls coolly observes courting rituals at all levels of society. Sexual conquest usually brings no lasting pleasure, especially for the predatory and foolish males who fill Ophüls's films. Instead, Ophüls emphasizes the subterfuges through which women satisfy their desires. The tales of deceived love that he presented in his American films gave way to a more explicit treatment of feminine sexual identity. In *Lola Montès*, the title character is a courtesan who rises through society and ends up as a performer in a circus, an object of fantasy but lifeless, withdrawn, and wholly artificial.

The films center on casual liaisons, extramarital affairs, and seduced innocence—all topics betraying Ophüls' roots

in theater and operetta of the 1920s. He distances us from his characters by several means—through irony, through a sense of a predetermined plot pattern that the characters do not realize, and especially through a narrator who addresses us directly. In *Lola Montès*, the ringmaster becomes a master of ceremonies who leads the circus audience, and us, into episodes from Lola's past. In *La Ronde*, the narrator strolls through what seems to be a street, mounts a theater stage to address us, and then is revealed to be in a film studio, turning the carousel that is the film's symbol of the endless dance of love (**17.8; Video 17.1**).

A comparable self-consciousness pervades the films' style. In a period when other directors were following the Neorealist impulse toward simplicity in staging and shooting, Ophüls required all the artifice of the French studio cinema to create his rococo world of restaurants, parlors, ballrooms, artists' lofts, and cobblestone streets. The lines of his compositions are sweeping arabesques that recall the frilly curves of the writing in the credit sequences. His camera sweeps as well, following characters as they stroll, dance, flirt, or race to their destinies. Even more than his Hollywood films, his French efforts return to the tradition of the *entfesselte camera*, the "unfastened camera," of the German studio cinema of his youth (see The Technological Updating of the German Studios).

These tendencies of Ophüls's work are evident in a single shot from *La Ronde* (**17.9–17.13**). At one level, the play of hiding and revealing the action repeats the rhythm of frustration and satisfaction of desire in the narrative's episodes, but the sheer zest in the graceful dance of the camera with the characters is itself a source of the audience's—and director's—pleasure. James Mason wrote in a poem about Ophüls, "A shot that does not call for tracks / is agony for poor dear Max. . . . / Once, when they took away his crane / I thought he'd never smile again."[1]

Jean Renoir was the last of the exiled prewar directors to return to France, and he worked only sporadically. He continued to live in Beverly Hills, occasionally teaching at Los Angeles universities, until his death in 1979. After two postwar features made in Hollywood, he undertook an American–British coproduction shot on location in India, *The River* (1951). There Renoir claims to have learned a more serene and accepting vision of life: "The only thing that I can bring to this illogical, irresponsible, and cruel universe is my love."[2] His work from this point on was balanced between a worship of the sensuousness of nature and a meditation on art as the repository of human values.

The themes of art and nature intermingle in *The River*. Three teenage girls are growing up in a Bengali river town. Harriet, who narrates the film from the vantage point of adulthood, writes poetry and dreams up stories. Valerie,

La Ronde

17.8 The *meneur de jeu* ("master of ceremonies") in *La Ronde*.

La Ronde

17.9 *La Ronde*: when the guilty wife comes to call on the young poet, he rushes to greet her.

La Ronde

17.10 In a reflexive gesture that announces the sheer artificiality of the set, the camera passes through the wall to show her entering.

La Ronde

17.11 17.11 As the couple move toward the parlor, Ophüls "loses" and then "finds" them through a play of props that momentarily block our view.

La Ronde

17.12, *left* She sits on the divan, and the camera draws a bit closer each time the poet tremblingly lifts a layer of veiling from her face (*La Ronde*).

17.13, *right* As he removes the last veil, her face is finally revealed.

The River

17.14, *left* *The River*: three girls reflect on new life . . .

17.15, *right* . . . and Renoir's camera moves serenely to the enduring river.

the oldest girl, becomes infatuated with a wounded American veteran, while Melanie, daughter of a British father and an Indian mother, quietly accedes to her role in Indian society and urges the tormented soldier to "accept everything." Renoir delicately balances two cultures, Western and Indian, counterposing the girls' fantastic intrigues with the Indian community's seasonal rituals. The girls are initiated into adulthood through the cycle of life: the death of a little brother, the birth of a sister. In the last shot, the camera rises past the three girls reacting apprehensively to the baby's first squalls (**17.14**). The ceaselessly flowing river becomes the center of the image (**17.15**), as the rhythms of nature frame the ongoing passions of everyday life. Westerners can learn this acceptance through art, as embodied in Harriet's poem:

> The river runs, the round world spins;
> Dawn and lamplight; midnight, noon.
> Sun follows day, night, stars, and moon;
> The day ends, the end begins.

During the 1940s, Renoir's reputation was in eclipse. France ciné-clubs began a Renoir revival late in the decade, and the January 1952 issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* timed a reevaluation of his work to coincide with the French release of *The River*. André Bazin's major essay, "The French Renoir," argued that he had made unique contributions to the nation's cinema. The 1950s saw a steady rise in Renoir's critical stock. A critics' forum at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair voted *Grand Illusion* one of the twelve best films of all times. Since the reconstructed version of *The Rules of the Game* was released in 1965, many critics have declared Renoir cinema's supreme artist.

Yet few critics would have rested that evaluation on Renoir's postwar work. Ironically, while many directors—some of them inspired by Renoir—exploited the sort of deep-space staging and complex camera movements that he had favored in the 1930s, he largely abandoned such techniques. He developed instead a simple, direct, at times theatrical style centered on the performer. His next film after *The River*, the French–Italian coproduction *The Golden Coach* (1953), pays homage to Italian classical theater (**Color Plate 17.1**). His first fully French-made—and most popular—film after the war, *French Cancan* (1955), dealt with the production of musical numbers in the Moulin Rouge in Paris. With *The Testament of Dr. Cordelier* (1959), he explored the television technique of shooting with multiple cameras to avoid interrupting the actor's performance. *Picnic on the Grass* (1959) made extensive use of zooms and telephoto framings, giving the actors considerable freedom of movement while the cameraman panned to follow them.

These post-*River* films continue Renoir's new concern with nature and art. *Picnic on the Grass* mocks artificial insemination and celebrates the joy of unbridled passion, while *Dr. Cordelier* shows the grotesque results of tampering, Dr. Jekyll-like, with nature. *The Golden Coach* treats the theater as a supreme achievement: a sharing of experience through sensuous artifice. Renoir's Technicolor contrasts the pale pastels of the viceroy's court with the

bright, saturated hues of the sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Italian *commedia dell'arte* plays (Color Plate 17.1). Such theatricality continued into Renoir's late career: his last film, *The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir* (1970) concludes with a shot in which the cast bows to the camera. Indeed, while not filming, Renoir was active in the theater, writing and directing plays.

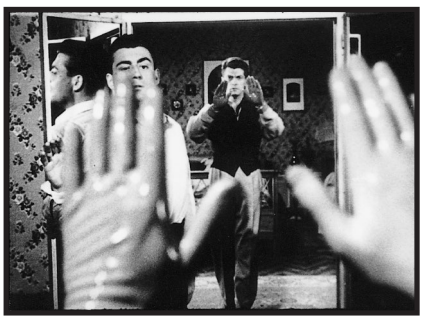
If Renoir saw art as an entryway to nature, Jean Cocteau treated it as a path to myth and the supernatural. Cocteau considered himself above all a poet, even though his creative output included novels, plays, essays, drawings, stage designs, and films. He was centrally involved with many of the most important avant-garde developments in France after World War I: Sergei Diaghilev's ballets; Pablo Picasso's paintings; the music of Erik Satie, Igor Stravinsky, and *Les Six*; and the experimental cinema of the early sound era (see Surrealism p. 279). After a decade of stage work, Cocteau began writing scripts during the Occupation.

After the war, Cocteau returned to filmmaking in earnest. Working frequently with the composer Georges Auric and the actor Jean Marais, Cocteau directed several self-consciously poetic works, seeking to create a marvelous world sealed off from ordinary reality and to convey imaginative truths through evocative symbols.

While *Beauty and the Beast* (1945) remains an exemplary case of rendering a fairy tale on film, *Orphée* (1950) has proved the most influential of Cocteau's work of this period. The film freely updates the myth of Orpheus, the poet who tries to rescue his wife Eurydice from death. Cocteau's Orphée lives in contemporary Paris, with a cozy bourgeois home and a loving wife. But he becomes fascinated with the Princess, who roars through the city in a black limousine and who seems to have captured Cégeste, a dead poet whose cryptic verses are broadcast on the car radio. The Princess, an emissary of death, falls in love with Orphée and captures Eurydice. In Cocteau's personal mythology, the poet becomes a charmed being, courting death in an attempt to discover enigmatic beauty.

In *Orphée*, Cocteau creates a fantasy world through striking cinematic means. The afterlife, *la Zone*, is a maze of factory ruins raked by searchlights—at once a bombed-out city and a prison camp. The dead return to life in reverse motion, while slow motion renders the trip to death's world as a floating, somnambulistic journey. Mirrors become the passageways between death and life. When Orphée dons the magic gloves, he penetrates the quivering liquid curtain of the mirror (**17.16**).

Cocteau conceived rich images that could be translated into many media, confirming his belief that the poet is not merely a writer but rather someone who creates magic through any imaginative means. His career typifies the intense interest that creative writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Claude Mauriac, Françoise Sagan, and Raymond Queneau took in the cinema. In addition, Cocteau's commitment to a cinema of private vision, even obsession, influenced New Wave directors and the American avant-garde.


Orphée

17.16 *Orphée*: the mirror as threshold and curtain.

Although Clair, Ophüls, Renoir, and Cocteau reasserted their distinctive identities in the postwar period, none represented a radical challenge to the prestige cinema. Two other directors struck a compromise with the Tradition of Quality while also reviving aspects of the 1930s realist tradition. Roger Leenhardt's first feature, *Les Dernières vacances* ("The Last Vacation," 1947) resembles the contemporary Aurenche-Bost output in its treatment of a young man's lost love, but the plot also brings economic factors to the fore in a way not typical of the Cinema of Quality. Jacques Becker gave the neighborhood film of the 1930s a new realism of setting (**17.17**). His *Casque d'or* ("Golden Cask," 1952) is a turn-of-the-century drama of life among petty thieves and criminals. The doomed romance of Marie and the carpenter Jo, heightened by a radiant romanticization of the enigmatic woman (**17.18**), creates an ambience not far from the Cinema of Quality. *Le Trou* ("The Hole," 1960), the story of a prison break, concentrates both on the mechanics of escape and on the need for trust among the prisoners as they cooperate in their flight. Many critics saw Becker's film as a humanistic call for collective unity reminiscent of 1930s Popular Front cinema.

New Independent Directors

One provision of the 1953 aid law encouraged the production of short films of artistic quality, and several filmmakers benefited from this. The veteran Jean Grémillon and the older Roger Leenhardt and Jean Mitry made several shorts in this period, but the most notable talents to emerge belonged to a younger generation. Alain Resnais,

Antoine et Antoinette

Casque d'or

17.17, *left* *Antoine et Antoinette* (1947, Becker): location shooting in the Paris Métro.

17.18, *right* Simone Signoret as Marie, seen through her lover's eyes in *Casque d'or*.

Georges Franju, and Chris Marker got their start making short poetic documentaries (see Chapter 21). Alexandre Astruc launched his career with *Le Rideau cramoisi* ("The Crimson Curtain," 1952), a symbolic Poe-like short film containing no dialogue. Agnès Varda's short feature *La Pointe courte* (1954) has a regional realism recalling *La Terra trema*, but it also presents abstract compositions and a stylized, discontinuous editing of conversations (see New Cinema: The Left Bank p. 393). In the work of Astruc and Varda, we find the first stirrings of the New Wave.

More central to mainstream cinema at the time was the eccentric, Stetson-wearing Jean-Pierre Melville. (An ardent lover of American culture, he changed his name in honor of Herman Melville.) In 1946, he became a producer in order to direct. He worked as an independent, eventually owning his own studio. He produced, directed, wrote, edited, and occasionally starred in his films, once claiming that he never had enough employees to make up a decently long credits list.

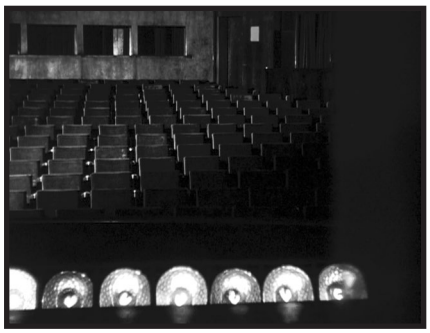
Melville's first film, *Le Silence de la mer* ("The Silence of the Sea," 1949), now seems one of the most experimental works of its day. During the German Occupation, an officer is assigned to live with an old man and his niece. The officer tries, in halting French, to engage them in conversation, but they ignore him and never speak in his presence. A tense silence envelops almost every scene. The most minute sounds, particularly the ticking of a clock, become vivid. The voice-over narration often daringly reiterates what the images show, and even introduces dialogue with such lines as "And he said. ..." As the Nazi becomes more worn down by the pair, he too lapses into silence and is unable to talk freely with his friends outside the household. At last he leaves. The niece, looking at him blankly, finally speaks: "Adieu."

A similar freedom of treatment dominates *Les Enfants terribles* ("The Terrible Children," 1950), Melville's adaptation of Cocteau's novel. Again there is a voice-over commentary (spoken by Cocteau), which slips in and out between characters' lines and almost becomes a participant in the dialogue. Melville respects Cocteau's personal mythology—the film opens with a snowball fight reminiscent of that in *Blood of a Poet* (1932)—while giving the piece a self-consciously theatrical quality. Characters look at or speak to the camera, and Melville occasionally treats the action as if it occurred on a stage (**17.19–17.21**). *Les Enfants terribles* reflects the tendency of postwar modernism to examine the relation between film and other arts.

Melville gained most fame for such dry, laconic gangster films as *Bob le flambeur* (1955), *Le Doulos* (1962), *Le Deuxième souffle* ("Second Breath," 1966), and *Le Samouraï* ("The Samurai," 1967). Expressionless men in trenchcoats and snap-brim hats stalk through gray streets to meet in piano bars. Almost completely impassive, they behave as if they have watched too many Hollywood film noirs—driving American sedans, pledging loyalty to their pals, dividing duties for a caper they intend to pull. Melville dwells on long silences as gunmen size each other up, stare at their reflections, or stoically realize that a deal has failed.

The films teem with bravura techniques—handheld camerawork, long takes, and available-light shooting (**17.22**). Melville often experimented with narrative. The plot of *Le Doulos* leaves out crucial scenes, leading us to misjudge the hero's motives as severely as do the gang members he seems to have betrayed. *Bob le flambeur* has a "hypothetical" sequence, introduced by the voice-over narrator: "Here's how Bob planned it to happen." We then see the robbery of the casino, played silently (**17.23; Video 17.2**). This is very different from the way the heist turns out (**17.24**).

Melville loved to watch movies. ("Being a spectator is the finest profession in the world."[3]) Many of his films are tributes to American cinema (**17.25**), and he brought to French film some of the audacious energy of Hollywood B pictures. If Renoir fathered the New Wave, Melville was its godfather.


Les Enfants terribles

17.19 *Les Enfants terribles*: a scene begins with a shot facing an auditorium . . .

Les Enfants terribles

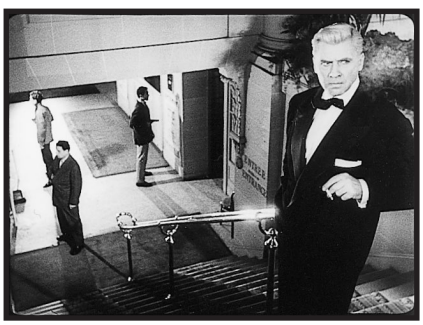
17.20 . . . the camera pulls back to reveal a curtain as seen through a window . . .

Les Enfants terribles

17.21 . . . then pans left to show us the children's bedroom.

Two Men in Manhattan

17.22 An off-the-cuff shot from *Two Men in Manhattan* (1958), where Melville acted as his own cinematographer.


Bob le flambeur

17.23, 17.24 Alternative versions of the robbery in *Bob le flambeur*.

Le Silence de la mer

17.25 In *Le Silence de la mer*, Melville paid homage to the deep focus of *Citizen Kane* (compare with 10.25).

SCANDINAVIAN REVIVAL

Denmark and Sweden proved to have the two most influential Nordic cinemas. As with Italian Neorealism and French cinema, their first contributions to 1940s art cinema were made during the war.

Denmark had a strong film industry in the 1910s, but it lost its international standing during World War I. Late in the 1930s, Danish cinema regained some ground, thanks partly to generous government policies that taxed ticket prices to create a fund for artistic and cultural filmmaking.

The Germans invaded Denmark in 1940. As elsewhere, the Nazis' ban on film imports from the Allied countries spurred domestic production. Documentary and educational films continued to be made under the Occupation, but the most important film, made for the country's major firm, Palladium, was Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Day of Wrath* (1943). This somber study of witchcraft and religious dogma in a seventeenth-century village marked Dreyer's return to Danish feature filmmaking after almost two decades. The film caused a sensation and was widely interpreted as an anti-Nazi allegory. When it was shown abroad after the war, it proved no less controversial, but more for its solemn tempo, its restrained technique (**17.26**), and its teasing ambiguities. *Day of Wrath* reestablished Dreyer on the international film scene (see Carl Theodor Dreyer box).

Swedish cinema had been in eclipse since Victor Sjöström and Mauritz Stiller were lured to Hollywood. Sweden was not invaded by the Nazis, but its own policy of neutrality shut out any foreign films considered propagandistic. The lack of competition stimulated the local industry. In 1942, the major studio Svensk Filmindustri hired Carl Anders Dymling as its head. He brought in

Day of Wrath

17.26 Chiaroscuro lighting and slow performance in *Day of Wrath*.

Sjöström as artistic supervisor of production, a gesture that was considered to symbolize a return to the great Swedish filmmaking tradition.

Once the war ended, Danish and Swedish filmmaking benefited from Scandinavia's economic recovery. Annual film outputs averaged fifteen to twenty features in Denmark and twice that in Sweden—lower figures than the wartime peaks but remarkably high for small countries. Here quality filmmaking was comparatively cheap. Production was dominated by large companies that insisted on small budgets and short shooting schedules. In 1951, Sweden levied an entertainment tax like that of Denmark, in order to subsidize artistic films.

Apart from Dreyer, the most famous Nordic filmmakers of the postwar decade were Swedish. Like Sjöström and Stiller, most of these men had ties to a rich theatrical

CARL THEODOR DREYER

Between the generation of Sjöström and Stiller, who made their first films in 1912, and the generation who began work in the 1930s, only one Scandinavian director came to worldwide prominence. Dreyer prefigured the traveling "international" director of the postwar period, making films in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, and France, notably *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and *Vampyr* (see Carl Dreyer: European Director p. 149). There followed a decade of inactivity, broken by some documentary shorts and *Day of Wrath*. After the Swedish *Two People* (1945), Dreyer made *Ordet* (*The Word*, 1954) and *Gertrud* (1964), both in Denmark. He died while planning a film on the life of Jesus.

Dreyer's earliest films revealed his fondness for static, highly pictorial compositions that alternate with intense close-ups of actors' facial expressions. In *Joan of Arc* and *Vampyr*, he also explored unusual camera movements—gymnastic rotations in the former, subtly misleading tracking movements in the latter. After *Vampyr*, Dreyer became convinced that the sound cinema required a more "theatrical" technique. His last four films, all adaptations of plays, are largely confined to interior settings and elaborate their action through lengthy conversations. Using very long takes, Dreyer records dialogue in rigid, harmonious compositions (**17.27**). The camera arcs gracefully across parlors as characters slowly move from a sofa to a table, from a doorway to a bedside. "Camera movement," he wrote, "gives a fine soft rhythm."[4] Dreyer's version of modernism acknowledges the film's source in a literary text and creates a "minimal" cinema of minutely varied pace, much more subdued than the aggressive theatricality of Visconti or Bergman.

Gertrud

17.27 A conversation in *Gertrud*.

Through this austere style, Dreyer presents the ineffable mystery of faith and love. In *Day of Wrath*, Anne goes to the stake acknowledging she is a witch, but we wonder whether the community has merely convinced her that she is guilty. *Ordet* ends with one of the most daring scenes in film history: a miracle created by a child's faith. In *Gertrud*, the woman who demands absolute devotion retreats into isolation, worshiping an ideal of pure love.

Dreyer's films were not popular successes, but his single-minded tenacity within the commercial film industry and his rigorous exploration of powerful themes won him critical regard. His contributions to modernist technique influenced Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Marie Straub, and other young directors

The Heavenly Play

Torment

17.28, *left* Chiaroscuro and Expressionist setting in Sjöberg's *The Heavenly Play*.

17.29, *right* *Torment*: Sinister, endless flights of stairs in the school are similar to those found in the city streets.

tradition. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Norwegian Henrik Ibsen and the Swede August Strindberg had made Scandinavian drama world famous. Both playwrights had a penchant for fantasy and expressionism, and their plays often used complex symbols to suggest characters' emotional states. Strindberg had also developed an intimate psychological drama called the *Kammerspiel*, or "chamber play." Typically, the Kammerspiel was set in a single room and staged in a small theater that would bring the audience close to the actors (see Kammerspiel p. 92) Of the filmmakers marked by these modernist trends, the two most influential were Alf Sjöberg and Ingmar Bergman (for more on the latter, see Chapter 19).

After making one film in 1929, Sjöberg became the major director at Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre. He returned to filmmaking in 1939 and completed several films during the war. One of the most original was *The Heavenly Play* (1942), which fused the silent-film traditions of naturalistic landscape and symbolic drama (**17.28**) to create an allegorical fantasy of Protestant redemption.

More influential outside Sweden was Sjöberg's *Torment* (1944), scripted by Bergman. A high-school student harassed by his Latin teacher, nicknamed Caligula, discovers that the man is a lecher, a Nazi sympathizer, and a murderer. *Torment*'s sympathy with teenage rebellion emerges not only from its story but also from a visual style derived from German Expressionism. Looming architecture and long, sharp shadows turn the entire city into a prison (**17.29**). The pudgy Caligula, with his round spectacles and fussy manner, becomes a wartime Caligari, and his shadow threatens the lovers in a gesture that echoes Murnau's vampire in *Nosferatu* (**17.30**).

After the war, Sjöberg continued to move between theater and cinema. After staging Strindberg's 1888 naturalist play *Miss Julie*, he adapted it to the screen in 1951. The film concentrates not only upon the performances, especially Anita Björk's skittery Julie, but it also expands the original Kammerspiel. In Strindberg's play, characters recount their memories in monologues. Sjöberg dramatizes the scenes as flashbacks that combine past and present in the same shot (**17.31**). Conventions of what would become art cinema can be found in Strindberg's original Kammerspiel, but Sjöberg adds a modernist ambiguity derived from film's power over space and time.

ENGLAND: QUALITY AND COMEDY

British film output declined during the war, when filmmaking personnel were conscripted and studio facilities were turned to military use. Yet high wartime attendance boosted the industry. The main companies—the Rank

Torment

Miss Julie

17.30, *left* Caligula as Nosferatu, in *Torment* (compare with 5.16).

17.31, *right* *Miss Julie* presents two time periods in one shot: Julie, sitting in the foreground, tells of an episode from her childhood; in the background, her mother talks with her as a child.

Organization, headed by J. Arthur Rank, and the Associated British Picture Corporation—expanded their domains. Associated British owned a major theater chain, while Rank controlled two others and owned the largest distribution firm, several studios, and two producing companies.

Problems in the Industry

In 1944, a report entitled "Tendencies to Monopoly in the Cinematograph Film Industry" had recommended that the major companies' power be reduced. The "Palache report," as it came to be known, remained the center of debate for years, but it was not acted on soon, partly because the industry seemed robust. High attendance continued, with that of 1946 the highest ever. More British films were being made, and many were popular at home and competitive abroad. Moreover, because Rank needed many films for his theater chains, he supported several small independent producers. Rank also had ties with some of the American Majors, and English films began to enter the United States regularly, often becoming successful there. For a few years, it seemed as though the intense competition between the British and American firms might diminish.

Yet trouble soon appeared. Production costs were rising, few films made profits, and Hollywood films commanded 80 percent of screen time. The left-wing Labour government, committed to fighting monopolies and protecting British industry from American competition, tackled these problems.

In 1947, the government imposed a 75-percent tariff on all imported American films. When the US industry immediately threatened a boycott, the government compromised and, in 1948, established a quota reminiscent of the prewar era: 45 percent of all screenings in Britain had to consist of British films. Many exhibitors and distributors, dependent on American films, opposed the quota, and it was soon reduced again, to 30 percent.

The Rank Organization was vertically integrated, and only a few firms controlled the industry, so the government could have forced companies to sell part of their holdings, as the American government did in the Paramount decision of 1948 (see The Paramount Decision p. 286). Those trying to cure the industry's woes, however, realized that "divorcement" decrees would be suicidal in Great Britain. If firms were forced to sell their theaters, American companies would simply buy them.

The government attempted another solution in 1949. The National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC) was founded for the purpose of loaning money to independent producers. Unfortunately, £3 million, more than half the total amount loaned out, went to one of the largest independents, British Lion, which producer Alexander Korda had acquired in 1946. British Lion soon went bankrupt, and its heavy losses weakened the NFFC's ability to support other firms.

After a year of financial crisis, the government tried once more to bolster production. In 1950, it added a tax on theaters' box office revenues. The "Eady levy," nicknamed after its planner, was initially voluntary but was made compulsory in 1957. The policy helped much local production, but British branches of American studios benefited greatly as well. Local filmmakers complained that the Eady Levy encouraged US runaway production (see The Decline of the Hollywood Studio System) and helped Hollywood compete with domestic product.

The film industry continued to decline during the 1950s, as competition with television increased. The problem of monopoly in the industry intensified. The Rank Organization and the Associated British Picture Corporation bought up some theaters, and other small, independent exhibitors were forced out of business by declining attendance. Despite industry problems, however, the decade after the war saw a number of important films and trends.

Literary Heritage and Eccentricity

British producers continued to debate whether to produce high-budget prestige films for export or more modest films aimed at home audiences. As always, many films were literary adaptations featuring famous actors. Laurence Olivier followed up his wartime success *Henry V* (1945) by directing and starring in *Hamlet* (1948) and *Richard III* (1955). Gabriel Pascal continued his association with the plays of George Bernard Shaw by making a lavish version of *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1946), with Vivien Leigh and Claude Rains. This approach to filmmaking was comparable to the French Tradition of Quality. In addition, two major British directors achieved international reputations during this period.

David Lean had his start during the war codirecting *In Which We Serve* (1942) with Noel Coward. His postwar career began with the release of *Brief Encounter* (1945), a story of a middle-aged man and a woman, both trapped in unexciting marriages, who fall in love. They meet repeatedly but resist having a sexual affair. Lean's restrained romanticism centers around Celia Johnson's portrayal of the heroine.

Lean went on to make two popular adaptations of Dickens novels, *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1948). Both featured Alec Guinness, who within a few

Oliver Twist

17.32 *Oliver Twist*: an elaborate studio recreation of Victorian London.

years became the most popular actor in exported British films. *Oliver Twist* is typical of Lean's postwar films, containing large, dark sets, deep-focus compositions, and film noir lighting (**17.32**). Lean also made comedies, such as *Hobson's Choice* (1953), in which a strong-willed heroine defeats her tyrannical father. Lean later gained wider renown with costume epics such as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Doctor Zhivago* (1965).

The other prominent director of the postwar years was Carol Reed. Reed had begun directing in the late 1930s, but his international reputation was built on *Odd Man Out* (1947), *The Fallen Idol* (1948), *The Third Man* (1949), *An Outcast of the Islands* (1951), and *The Man Between* (1953). Like Lean, Reed favored dramatic lighting, often intensified by flashy camera techniques. Thus, *The Third Man* (probably influenced by Orson Welles, who plays the villain) is full of canted framings and uses an unusual instrument, the zither, for its musical accompaniment.

Reed's awareness of emerging art-cinema norms is evident in one of his most important films: *Odd Man Out*. An Irish Republican Army unit steals payroll money to fund its terrorist activities. During the robbery, the hero (James Mason) is wounded. As he flees, he encounters a series of people who try to save him or to exploit him. While Reed shot some scenes in Irish slums (**17.33**), several passages stress a more subjective realism (**17.34, 17.35**).

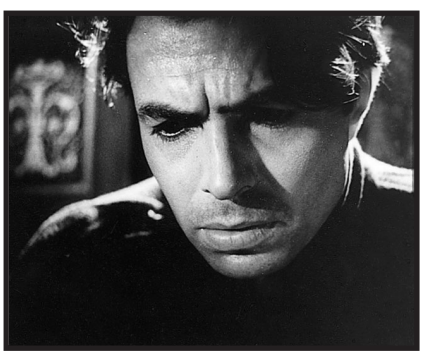
Less famous than Lean and Reed, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger were the most unusual British filmmakers of the era. They had created their production company, The Archers, in 1943, and supported it with Rank's help. Writing, producing, and directing in collaboration, the pair made modest dramas in black and white and elaborate Technicolor productions.

Typical of their offbeat approach is *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945). A strong-willed young woman engaged to a rich industrialist attempts to join him on a Scottish island. As she waits for the weather to clear, she struggles against falling in love with a pleasant, but impoverished, Scottish landowner. Powell and Pressburger display their characteristic feeling for the British countryside, as well as their sympathy for eccentric characters. They even make the headstrong, greedy heroine sympathetic. Another intimate drama, *The Small Back Room* (1948), deals with the intriguing subject of an alcoholic whose job is to defuse unexploded bombs left in England after the war.

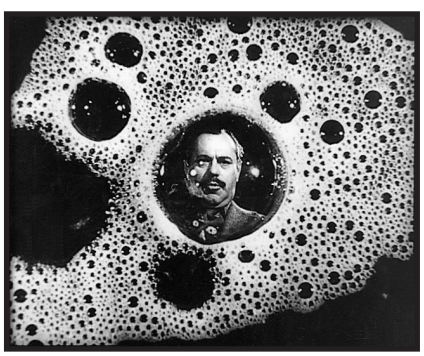
Powell and Pressburger directed some of the most opulent color films ever made. Their most popular film, *The Red Shoes* (1948), and its successor, *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1951), use ballet to motivate deliriously stylized decors and cinematography. *A Matter of Life and Death*

Odd Man Out

17.33 Location shooting in *Odd Man Out*.


Odd Man Out

17.34 The wounded hero stares down at the table . . . (*Odd Man Out*)


Odd Man Out

17.35 . . . and we see his point of view of a pool of beer, with characters from earlier scenes of the film superimposed in the bubbles.

The Blue Lamp

17.36 The Ealing Studios, nestled in a suburban neighborhood, had no backlot on which to build sets. Directors filmed scenes on location, as in *The Blue Lamp*.

The Lavender Hill Mob

17.37 A landscape of bombed-out London in *The Lavender Hill Mob*.

The Lavender Hill Mob

17.38 When the Lavender Hill Mob plot their crime, the low-key lighting and deep-focus composition suggest Hollywood gangster films of the 1940s (compare with 15.18–15.20) (*The Lavender Hill Mob*).

(aka *Stairway to Heaven*, 1946) centers on a British pilot who impossibly survives a potentially fatal airplane crash and argues in a heavenly courtroom (in his dream?) that he should be sent back to earth to join the woman he loves. Color film stock used for the sequences on earth contrasts with black-and-white film used for heaven.

One of Powell and Pressburger's color masterpieces is *Black Narcissus* (1947), a story of nuns trying to run a dispensary and school in a Tibetan palace formerly used as a harem. Sexual frustrations, a lack of understanding of local customs, and the general ambience of the setting drive some of the nuns to dereliction of duty, nostalgic fantasies, madness, and even attempted murder. The directors created a vivid sense of the Himalayas, even though they shot nearly the entire film in the studio (**Color Plate 17.2; Video 17.3**).

Powell and Pressburger's most extravagant works contrast strongly with the modest product of Michael Balcon's Ealing Studios. Balcon, a veteran of the industry since the early 1920s, became head of Ealing in 1938. In the postwar period, Ealing prospered because the Rank Organization helped finance production and released the studio's films through its distribution network. Balcon achieved a consistency of tone across the studio by making decisions democratically (allowing the studio staff to vote at roundtable meetings) and by giving filmmakers an unusual degree of independence.

Today, Ealing Studios is usually associated with comedies starring Alec Guinness, Stanley Holloway, and other major British actors, but only about one-third of the company's output was in this genre. Indeed, one of the most successful Ealing films is a realistic drama about police life, *The Blue Lamp* (1950). Scenes in which a veteran cop explains the job to a new recruit give a systematic account of police procedure, in the tradition of the 1930s and wartime British documentaries. As in other Ealing films, many scenes were shot on location in poor or bombed-out areas of London (**17.36**).

Ealing's reputation for comedies was established with three 1949 releases, *Passport to Pimlico* (directed by Henry Cornelius), *Whisky Galore!* (aka *Tight Little Island*, directed by Alexander Mackendrick), and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (directed by Robert Hamer). *Kind Hearts*, in which Guinness plays eight different characters, swept him to international stardom. While many Hollywood-style comedies depended on slapstick or on sophisticated screwball situations, Ealing's humor was built on injecting a single fantastic premise into an ordinary situation. *Passport to Pimlico*, for example, takes place in the drab working-class London district of Pimlico, and much of the film was shot on location. Yet the plot depends on a zany premise: researchers discover that the suburb is actually not part of England at all but belongs to the French district of Burgundy. As a result, following a maddeningly linear logic, Britishers must have a passport to enter Pimlico, and the residents are no longer subject to London's rationing restrictions. Like other Ealing comedies, *Passport to Pimlico* presents an imaginary escape from postwar austerity.

Another typical Ealing comedy is Charles Crichton's *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951). The hero, played by Guinness, works guarding gold shipped to London banks. With a gang of mild-mannered crooks, he plans and executes a massive heist. The Ealing fantasy emerges when the gang disguises the bullion as souvenir Eiffel Towers. The film mixes realism with stylization. The near-documentary opening sequence depicts the hero's daily routine. Scenes shot on location (**17.37**) contrast with scenes that parody film noir and even Ealing's own *Blue Lamp* (**17.38**).

Crichton returned to prominence decades later with *A Fish Called Wanda* (1989), which many critics considered an updating of the Ealing tradition.

The Ealing comedies depend on a notion of English eccentricity: in *The Lavender Hill Mob*, the hero entertains a sweet elderly woman by reading lurid crime thrillers to her. The last major film from the studio, Mackendrick's *The Ladykillers* (1955), revolves around a dotty old lady who discovers that the string quintet players renting her spare room are a gang of robbers.

Art-House Success Abroad

Distinctive though the Ealing and Archers films were, they fall into recognizable commercial genres and employ classical storytelling techniques. Yet the success of these films abroad depended largely on the same art theaters that showed Italian Neorealist or Scandinavian films. Although the films were not themselves modernist, they reinforced the trend toward international film circulation that fostered art-cinema trends elsewhere. In particular, they showed that the US market could support European filmmaking to an unprecedented extent.

The pattern was set quietly by *I Know Where I'm Going!*, which became an unexpected hit in a New York art house. Soon afterward Olivier's *Henry V* (US release 1946) ran for thirty-four weeks in a small Manhattan theater at high admission prices. In 1948, his *Hamlet* became such a hit in small theaters that it moved into wide release and won several Oscars. *Brief Encounter*, *Blithe Spirit*, and other British films prospered in the art-house circuit, with *The Red Shoes*, astonishingly, becoming the top US box-office attraction of 1948. An Ealing comedy could make more money in art houses than in limited release to larger theaters.

In the mid-1950s, most of the older creative figures of the early postwar era lost momentum. Powell and Pressburger broke up The Archers in 1956; Powell's career was nearly curtailed by the scandal aroused by *Peeping Tom* (1960). (Although it was a thoughtful examination of a serial killer's psyche, *Peeping Tom* was denounced as gory trash by British critics.) Heavy losses forced Balcon to sell Ealing's studio facilities in 1955, though he made a few more films before losing the company. Some of the most successful directors of this era, such as Lean and Reed, went on to make big-budget, American-financed projects. These developments cleared the way for a generation of filmmakers who would turn against the polished cinema of the postwar decade.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Andrew Sarris, ed., *Interviews with Film Directors* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), p. 295.
2. Quoted in Christopher Faulkner, *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 170.
3. Quoted in Rui Nogueira, ed., *Melville on Melville* (New York: Viking, 1971), p. 64.
4. Quoted in Sarris, *Interviews with Film Directors*, p. 111.

The Murderers Are Among Us

CHAPTER 18

POSTWAR CINEMA BEYOND THE WEST, 1945–1959

Chandralekha

In the mid-1950s, the world was producing around 2,800 feature films per year. About 35 percent of these came from the United States and Western Europe (often called the "First World"). Another 5 percent were made in the USSR and the Eastern European countries under its control. Although quantitatively small, the output of this "Second World" dominated the Soviet bloc (where few films were imported from the West) and had notable influence in other regions.

Sixty percent of feature films were made outside Western countries and the Soviet bloc. Japan accounted for about 20 percent of the world total. The rest came from India, Hong Kong, Mexico, and other less industrialized nations. The stunning rise of production in the developing countries is one of the major events in film history.

This chapter examines postwar filmmaking in major non-Western regions: Japan, the USSR and its satellites, and areas of what was coming to be called the "Third World."

GENERAL TENDENCIES

After World War II, international affairs were dominated by two superpowers: the United States and the USSR. In the postwar settlements, the United States brought Japan into the Western alliance, while the USSR took control of portions of Eastern Europe. For the next several decades, the power split created competing spheres of influence.

Over the same period, colonies began to break away from the Western European empires. Through negotiation or insurrection, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Burma (now Myanmar), Egypt, Cuba, and other countries gained independence in the 1940s and 1950s. Western policymakers feared that resources and markets would be lost if these new nations aligned

themselves with the USSR. The 1949 Chinese revolution, which installed a government allied with Moscow, demonstrated that Communism could take power in an underdeveloped nation.

Most decolonized nations joined the Western camp because local leaders had been trained there and conditions for investment and trade were firmly established. Under this "neocolonialism," such countries were politically sovereign but economically dependent on the Western powers. Many countries in Latin America were prime examples of neocolonialism.

The Third World, where cities were growing fast and television had hardly penetrated, presented a huge market for films. The USSR and its satellite countries virtually banned American films, but in almost every other market Hollywood cinema ruled. As in Europe, US firms established powerful regional distribution companies throughout the Third World, and exhibitors often favored the popular and cheap Hollywood product. The Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA) negotiated favorable quotas and fiscal policies with local governments (see The Decline of the Hollywood Studio System p. 287). Soon, prewar conditions returned, with Hollywood movies occupying between 50 and 90 percent of screen time in most countries.

Yet Hollywood reduced its output in the 1950s, and it could not fill the appetites of Third World urban populations who might go to the movies every month or even every week—a far higher average than that in the United States or much of Europe. And in most countries, indigenous stars, locales, and music remained powerful attractions.

Despite the US companies' dominance of world markets, then, film production rose in the developing countries. Burma, Pakistan, South Korea, and the Philippines had had virtually no film production before the war, but in the 1950s each produced more films annually than almost any European country. In postwar Egypt, the growth of cities and an economic upturn created a filmmaking boom that made Egyptian films the most widely circulated Middle Eastern product. The most spectacular rise occurred in Hong Kong; film output grew from about 70 features in 1950 to more than 250 in 1962—more than that of the United States and Britain combined.

Non-Western film enterprises organized production in various ways. In the Soviet sphere of influence, the centralized vertical monopoly system established in the USSR was imitated. Directors, writers, and technicians were kept on salary whether working or not. At every step, a film was subjected to financial and ideological scrutiny. The system was at its most inflexible in the Soviet Union and China; in the USSR, output dropped dramatically after the war. The major Eastern bloc nations, however, managed to increase production during the 1950s as their economies grew. They decentralized production, weakened ideological demands, and increased export possibilities.

Outside the Eastern bloc, the most common option was artisanal, small-company production on the postwar European model. In India and South Korea, where the government refused to support the industry, independent production created chaos, with speculators using cinema to turn a quick profit. In Mexico, where the state protected the industry, independent production proceeded in a somewhat more orderly fashion.

Some countries sought to imitate Hollywood's vertically integrated studio system. This strategy failed in Argentina and succeeded only partially in Brazil, but it proved successful in East Asia. Japan sustained its strong vertical oligopoly throughout the postwar era. A similar structure appeared in Hong Kong. By 1961, the prosperous Shaw Brothers company surpassed even Hollywood's "factory system" by building Movietown, a 46-acre complex of studios, sets, laboratory facilities, and dormitories where 1,500 performers and 2,000 staff worked virtually around the clock.

New countries earned some international notice. The Asian Film Festival (established in Tokyo in 1954) and the Moscow International Film Festival (1959) brought non-Western cinemas greater worldwide recognition. By and large, however, the rich film traditions of the Middle East, the Far East, Latin America, and the Indian subcontinent remained almost completely unknown in the West. In 2007, Martin Scorsese and other filmmakers started the World Cinema Project to restore classics from countries that did not have archives able to preserve their national output. In its first ten years, the Project restored twenty-eight films from developing countries. In 2017, Scorsese announced the formation of the African Film Heritage Project, to focus on a continent where the situation is particularly dire. Still, the vast majority of films from such areas remain inaccessible, and generalizations about tendencies in form, theme, and style must be tentative.

As in the West, most production was in popular genres: action and adventure films, romances, comedies, musicals, melodramas, and adaptations of literary classics. More "serious" works often depicted episodes of national history or contemporary social problems. Many filmmakers were strongly influenced by documentary practices and Italian Neorealism and sought to create a cinema more realistic than the mainstream product.

Filmmakers in Japan, the Second World, and the Third World were also influenced by formal trends of the West. Scriptwriters made flashback construction common. Directors began using wide-angle lenses to create deep-space staging and deep-focus cinematography (**18.1**).

The Cranes Are Flying

18.1 The distorting effect of the wide-angle lens in *The Cranes Are Flying* (USSR, 1957).

The zoom lens, revived in late-1940s Hollywood, gained wider international currency through its extensive use in Hungarian and Polish films of the late 1950s. In all, the postwar decades saw a return to the cross-national stylistic influences and the circulation of technology that World War II had momentarily halted.

JAPAN

World War II devastated Japan. American firebombing laid waste to the largest cities, and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki left casualties on an unprecedented scale. Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, having lost almost 8 million soldiers and more than 600,000 civilians. US forces occupied Japan, directing it toward allegiance with the First World.

The Occupation was administered by General Douglas MacArthur; both he and his official bureaucracy were known as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP). SCAP's goal was to remake Japanese society. The large, family-run conglomerates, known as *zaibatsu*, were dissolved. Rural landlords' estates were given to tenant farmers. Universities were created, and the country had a new constitution. Women were granted the vote, and divorce and inheritance laws were liberalized.

As the 1949 Chinese revolution made the American government fear the spread of Communism throughout Asia, Japan was designated Asia's bulwark of Western capitalism and democracy. In this Cold War atmosphere, some SCAP reforms, such as the encouragement of labor unions, were rapidly scaled back. With American economic assistance, the economy was rebuilt. When the Korean War (1950–1953) gave Japan a crucial strategic role and a source of war-related business, the country began a period of unprecedented economic growth.

Industry Recovery under the Occupation

SCAP officials took a keen interest in the film industry. They reviewed wartime productions for "feudalistic" and "nationalistic" content. Hundreds of films were banned, many of them burned. SCAP encouraged films on democratic themes, such as women's rights and the struggle against militarism, and even insisted that modernization should include kissing scenes (long forbidden by Japanese tradition). But not wishing to strengthen left-wing sentiments, SCAP also discouraged films criticizing Japanese militarism or the wartime suppression of civil rights.

During the war, the industry had consolidated its forces under three companies: Shochiku, Toho, and Daiei (see Government Pressure on the Industry p. 218). Under Occupation auspices, independent production grew considerably, but the three vertically integrated firms controlled distribution and exhibition. They worked with SCAP authorities to plan films that followed the new policies. In turn, SCAP restrained labor activities that threatened to disrupt the studios.

With relative stability in the production sector, other companies entered the market. During a 1946 strike at Toho, one union faction formed an alternative company, Shintoho ("New Toho"). At first, Shintoho shared distribution and theaters with the parent company, but, in 1950, the units formally split into two vertically integrated firms. In 1951, Toei ("Eastern Film Company") also entered the field. By building theaters in the center of urban traffic and by winning control of the cheaper double-feature market, Toei became in 1956 the most profitable studio in the industry. And in 1954 the moribund Nikkatsu was revitalized. It refurbished its studios and lured disaffected employees away from other firms. Soon it was, like its competitors, turning out a film each week.

In the postwar era, the industry rapidly recovered and expanded. SCAP had admitted hundreds of American films to Japan, but, despite their popularity, the domestic industry kept firm control of the market. By the mid-1950s, Japanese firms could count on 19 million viewers per week—nearly half the attendance in the United States and five times that in France. Overall, the decade saw unprecedented prosperity, with production increasing to more than 500 films a year by 1960. This success allowed the industry to invest in the Fujicolor process (first seen in *Carmen Comes Home*, 1951) and in widescreen technology, which quickly became standard in Japanese studios.

Japanese cinema also burst onto the international scene. Masaichi Nagata, head of Daiei, broke through with *Rashomon*, which won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival of 1951 and the Academy Award for the best foreign film. Though hardly a typical Japanese film, *Rashomon* immediately drew worldwide attention. Nagata began producing high-quality costume pictures suitable for export. "America was making action pictures," he

explained. "France had love stories, and Italy realism. So I chose to approach the world market with the appeal of Japanese historical subjects. Old Japan is more exotic than Westernized Japan is to Westerners."[1] Such Daiei films as *Ugetsu Monogatari* (1953), *Sansho the Bailiff* (1954), and *Gate of Hell* (1954) won festival awards and increased Western audiences' appetite for Japanese cinema.

Banned during the Occupation, *jidai-geki* (historical films) reappeared soon after the Americans departed in 1952. The *chambara* (swordfight movie) remained the staple product, while more dignified jidai-geki, principally Teinosuke Kinugasa's *Gate of Hell* and Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954), renewed the genre.

Still, Japanese production concentrated on the broad category of *gendai-geki* (films set in the contemporary period). These included extreme leftist films, pacifist and antinuclear films, salaryman comedies, musicals, films about delinquent youths, and monster movies (e.g., *Godzilla*, 1954). Most popular were the *shomin-geki* (films of ordinary daily life). These melodramas of family crises or young romance sustained entire studios and often became sensational hits. Such films were seldom exported because they were regarded as too mundane and slowly paced for the international audience.

The Veteran Directors

Directors who had made their initial successes in the 1920s and 1930s played central roles in the postwar era. For example, Kinugasa continued to be known for his quality jidai-geki. His postwar production of *Actress* (1947), based on the life of a pioneer of modern Japanese theater, is less typical of his output than the florid *Gate of Hell* (1954). Shot on Eastman Color stock, the film self-consciously borrowed techniques of Japanese scroll painting, not only in its color schemes but also in its high-angle views (**18.2**). Less well known than Kinugasa's films was the work of Hiroshi Shimizu, who went on producing excellent films about children. His *Children of the Beehive* (1948) used nonprofessional actors and real locations to portray the plight of war orphans. Shimizu founded an orphanage and used many of the children as players in his films.

Mikio Naruse, who had worked for various studios in the 1930s, made several outstanding shomin-geki films for Toho, Shintoho, and Daiei. *Repast* (1951), *Lightning* (1952), *Mother* (1952), and *Flowing* (1956) center on relations between mother and daughter, aunt and niece, sister and sister. In these dark melodramas, set in working-class neighborhoods, characters are plagued by sickness, debt, and jealousy. Hideko Takamine, one of the most accomplished actresses of the postwar period, often appears in the role of the suffering heroine (**18.3**).

Less bleak is the postwar work of Heinosuke Gosho, who tempers the shomin-geki with muted lyricism. *Where Chimneys Are Seen* (1953; **18.4**), for example, tells a tale of marital mistrust, but Gosho lightens it with a wry motif: from different vantage points in the neighborhood, the same group of chimneys seems to be two, or three, or four. This hint that one's situation may seem different from various standpoints makes the married couple's tribulations seem less tragic than they believe.

The two most distinguished old masters of the postwar period were Kenji Mizoguchi and Yasujiro Ozu. As in the 1930s, Mizoguchi was drawn to social-problem films

Gate of Hell

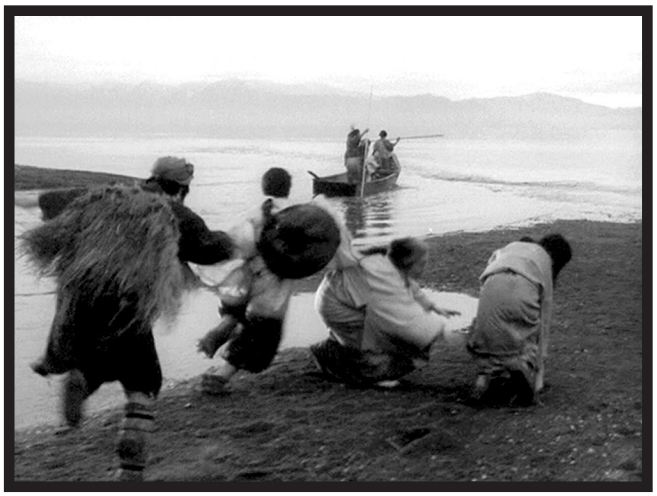
18.2 A high-angle shot in *Gate of Hell* recalls the "floating perspective" of Japanese prints.

Floating Clouds

18.3 *Floating Clouds* (1955): After becoming the mistress of an American soldier, Yukiko (Hideko Takamine) harshly criticizes the Japanese man who had promised to marry her.

Where Chimneys Are Seen

18.4 Four chimneys, or three, or two? Different ways of looking at the same thing in Gosho's *Where Chimneys Are Seen*.



Sansho the Bailiff

18.5 The frightening kidnapping scene in *Sansho the Bailiff* relies on atmospheric effects of water and mist.

centering on women's suffering, and SCAP authorities were highly encouraging. *Victory of Women* (1946) presents a female attorney defending a woman who in a burst of mad despair has killed her child. *Women of the Night* (1948) portrays the life of prostitutes, a subject Mizoguchi was to take up again in his last work, *Street of Shame* (1956). In the same period, Mizoguchi launched a string of historical films with *The Life of Oharu* (1952), a somber adaptation of a literary classic. Mizoguchi's old associate Nagata saw the export possibilities in such prestigious fare, so under the auspices of the Daiei company, Mizoguchi went on to make *Ugetsu Monogatari* ("A Tale of Ugetsu," 1953), *Sansho the Bailiff* (1954), *Chikamatsu Monogatari* (*The Crucified Lovers*, 1954), and *New Tales of the Taira Clan* (1955).

Mizoguchi continued to place the camera at a considerable distance from the characters, seldom cutting in for close-ups. As a result, his dense, complicated shots often last several minutes. Although he sometimes moves his camera, many shots remain static and create visual interest through slowly developing compositions. This deliberate style suited the literary adaptations he prepared with his long-time screenwriter Yoshikata Yoda. In his 1950s films, Mizoguchi's rich long shots deliberately echo pictorial styles found in classic Japanese art (**18.5**).

Yasujiro Ozu's postwar films seemed no less traditional. After some shomin-geki in a realist vein (such as *Record of a Tenement Gentleman*, 1947), Ozu collaborated with screenwriter Kogo Noda on a string of major works. These films usually center on family crises: marriage, separation, and death. In *Late Spring* (1949), a dutiful daughter faces the necessity of leaving her widowed father alone. In *Early Summer* (1951), several generations of a family are shaken by a daughter's impulsive decision to marry. *Tokyo Story* (1953) chronicles an elderly couple's visit to their grown, overbusy children. In *Equinox Flower* (1958) and *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962), a father must accept his daughter's wish to leave the household (**Video 18.1**). Ozu and Noda explore a few dramatic issues from various angles. Usually, the film is suffused with a resignation to life's painful changes—an attitude embodied in the gentle smile and sigh of Chishu Ryu, Ozu's perennial actor.

A comparable calm pervades the director's style. The films adhere to the rules he set for himself in the 1930s: low camera position, 360-degree shooting space, cutting for graphic effects, and transitional sequences that obey a logic of similarity and difference rather than strict spatial continuity. Now filming in color, he turns mundane settings into abstract patterns (**Color Plate 18.1**). As ever, his camera is attracted by humble objects in the corner of a room, down a hallway, or on a thoroughfare (**18.6**). The peaceful contemplation at the heart of the drama is matched by a style that allows us time to look closely at the characters and their world. This quietude, sometimes broken by sly humor, makes Ozu's films seem undramatic. But he came to be recognized as one of the cinema's most sensitive explorers of everyday life.

The War Generation

As in other countries, many of Japan's most notable directors of the postwar decade began their career during the war. Keisuke Kinoshita's wartime efforts, including *The Blossoming Port* (1943) and *Army* (1944), were home-front

Early Summer

18.6 Ozu reveals in an urban landscape the mysterious beauty of a still life (*Early Summer*).

Twenty-Four Eyes

18.7 The devoted teacher (Hideko Takamine) takes her students on an outing in the shadow of war (*Twenty-Four Eyes*).

The Burmese Harp

18.8 In *The Burmese Harp*, the soldier who has stolen a monk's robe finds a mass of dead soldiers and begins to gather the corpses for funeral rites.

dramas lacking the strident nationalism sometimes seen in the genre. *Army*'s ending, in fact, hints at a critique of militarist ideology. During the Occupation, Kinoshita made one of the first SCAP-approved pictures: *Morning for the Osone Family* (1946). Here 1930s militarism brings on a family's suffering, but the war's end promises them a bright future. Over the next four decades, Kinoshita directed many gendai-geki. His most widely seen film in the West is *Twenty-Four Eyes* (1954), a heartrending tale of a dedicated teacher in a rural school before and after the war (**18.7**).

Kon Ichikawa's first film, a puppet adaptation of a kabuki play, was made near the war's end but banned by SCAP. Trained as a cartoonist, Ichikawa acquired a reputation as an efficient craftsman. He never specialized in a genre, but his postwar reputation rested largely on satirical and grotesque comedies like *Odd Obsession* (1959) and on intense dramas. In *The Burmese Harp* (1956), a soldier forced to disguise himself as a monk is eventually won over to a humanistic pacifism (**18.8**). *Fires on the Plain* (1958) presents the Philippines front in the grim last days of the war, when starving soldiers resort to cannibalism. Immensely prolific and commercially successful, Ichikawa varied his style. Many of his films indulge in flamboyant technique (direct address to the audience in *Odd Obsession*, decentered widescreen compositions in *Conflagration*, 1958, and *An Actor's Revenge*, 1963), while others, such as *The Burmese Harp*, are far more subdued.

The most widely acclaimed talent to come to prominence in the postwar period was Akira Kurosawa. He had made several features during the war (see Ozu, Mizoguchi, and Kurosawa in Wartime p. 223), one of which, *The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail* (1945), was a satiric jidai-geki made at the very end of the war and was banned by SCAP. It was a rare setback for Kurosawa, who remained prolific for many decades. The international success of his *Rashomon* made him for decades the best-known Japanese director outside the country. We consider his career in Chapter 19.

POSTWAR CINEMA IN THE SOVIET SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

After the Allied victory in Europe, the United States and the USSR began to establish spheres of influence. The Soviet Union had acquired the Baltic republics in the 1939 pact with Hitler. In 1945 at Yalta, Joseph Stalin was granted preliminary control over territories held by Soviet troops, which included Eastern Germany, most of Eastern Europe, and Mongolia. China's 1949 revolution brought Communists to power and initially aligned the country with the USSR. By 1950, several countries had become Soviet satellites.

Most of those nations had worse economic and social problems than Western Europe. More than 25 million Soviet citizens had been killed, and as many were homeless. Hitler had resettled or massacred millions of Germans and Eastern Europeans. Towns, bridges, waterways, and rail lines were destroyed. A 1947 famine took almost a million lives in Russia alone. Because Stalin distrusted American aid, no Marshall Plan funds helped rebuild Eastern Europe. Eastern bloc leaders followed Moscow's example in developing heavy industry and collectivized farms.

A standard cycle of cultural activity also emerged in the Soviet bloc countries. First, there would be a period of tight political control. Writers and artists would be faced with strict demands for doctrinaire Communist art. This repression would be lifted by a moment of liberalization. But then this loosening would be perceived as threatening stability, and the government would enforce new

restraints. This cycle of "freeze" and "thaw" would recur throughout the postwar era, and it emerged first in the Soviet Union.

The USSR: From High Stalinism to the Thaw

The Soviet people lived in wartime stringency well into the 1950s. Leaders exhorted the workers to sterner sacrifices, insisting that the new enemy was the Western alliance. Political repression returned in full force. Into prison camps poured captured soldiers, refugees, religious believers, and political prisoners.

Obstacles of the Postwar Years The Communist Party quickly reasserted its domination of the arts. In 1946, Minister of Culture Alexander Zhdanov, who had led the cultural purges of the late 1930s, launched a new campaign. The policy of Socialist Realism (see The Doctrine of Socialist Realism p. 229) became even more constraining than it had been in the 1930s. The writer or dramatist had to affirm Communist heroism and patriotism; there could be no ambiguity about characters' motives or purposes. The party harassed artists, charging them with disloyalty and neglect of political duty. Admitting to Western influences, as Grigori Alexandrov did in acknowledging his debts to American comedy, brought accusations of "kowtowing to bourgeois culture." Just as Socialist Realism had stifled Soviet modernism in the early 1930s, Zhdanov's new policies tried to ensure that Western European trends, particularly Neorealism, would have no influence on postwar Soviet film.

Film production was already a cumbersome bureaucratic process, and Zhdanov's campaign for ideological purity brought the studios to a virtual standstill: a script might wend its way through the bureaucracy for two years before getting approval. Alexander Dovzhenko's *Michurin* (1948) and Sergei Gerasimov's *Young Guard* (1948) were "corrected" during scripting and after filming. Other films, notably the second part of Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* (1946), were banned outright. All the Soviet "film factories" combined produced seventeen features in 1948, fifteen in 1949, thirteen in 1950, and a mere nine in 1951.

Films that survived this system operated within narrow genre constraints. Fairy tales showed off the exotic cultures of the republics, and political dramas attacked American foreign policy. Biographies of artists and scientists continued the 1930s trend of Russian nationalism, with Stalin's image playing a central role (**18.9**). "Artistic documentaries" about the war mixed newsreel footage with restaged scenes, portraying a larger-than-life Stalin deciding the fate of civilization. In all genres, the emphasis

In the Name of Life

18.9 The scientist receives his reward under the benevolent gaze of the leaders (*In the Name of Life*, 1947, Alexander Zharki and Iosif Kheifits).

was on exceptional protagonists. Although such characters were said to derive their strength from the people, the ordinary person usually served only to inspire or assist the hero.

Most of the pioneering 1920s filmmakers became inactive. Lev Kuleshov continued teaching but made no films. Poor health kept Eisenstein from revising *Ivan the Terrible*, and he died in 1948 without making another film. Vsevolod Pudovkin made two films after the war, and Dovzhenko made just one. Only Alexandrov, Sergei Yutkevich, Fridrikh Ermler, and Grigori Kozintsev worked steadily. A younger generation, consisting of Gerasimov, Mark Donskoi, Mikhail Romm, and Iosif Kheifits, became the central figures of postwar filmmaking. All of them launched their careers in the early 1930s and had produced major Socialist Realist works. Particularly skillful in adapting to policy was the Georgian Mikhail Chiaurelli, whose *The Vow* (1946) and *The Unforgettable Year 1919* (1951) took Stalin worship to dizzying heights.

Even top directors were vulnerable to official reprimand, however, and so they retreated into a uniformity of style. The inflated tendencies of the wartime cinema (see The Soviet Cinema in Wartime p. 234) were carried to extremes. The "artistic documentaries" showed the nation's leaders brooding in huge offices or striding down colossal corridors. In Chiaurelli's *The Fall of Berlin* (1949), the reunion of the couple takes place before a huge crowd, with Stalin towering above all (**Color Plate 18.2**). Even the more intimate *Young Guard* uses lengthy takes and deep focus to present its young people as a monumental ensemble (**18.10**). Postwar Socialist Realist cinema was even more rigid and academic than the 1930s version.

Young Guard

18.10 An indomitable pose of youthful courage climaxes a long take in a prison scene (*Young Guard*).

Tales of Lenin

18.11 In Yutkevich's *Tales of Lenin* (1957), an old-fashioned technique sanctifies the leader.

The House I Live In

18.12 A subdued presentation of wartime homecoming: while the populace celebrates with fireworks, a soldier's greatcoat is draped over a chair and a reunited couple embrace offscreen (*The House I Live In*).

The ponderousness of this approach soon became evident. In 1952, party spokesmen complained that most films lacked conflict; the fear of censorship had created blandness. At the party congress of the same year, the leadership demanded an increase in film output. The production process smoothed out. Now scripts about ordinary persons could be accepted, as long as the Communist Party still played a positive role in the story.

Stalin's Death and the New Humanism Stalin's death in March 1953 triggered a power struggle that five years later would carry Nikita Khrushchev to leadership. In the course of the years from 1953 to 1958, known broadly as the "thaw," the party undertook some reforms. Taxes were lowered, thousands of political prisoners were freed from the camps, and the government invested in education and research. Most improvements were aimed at reinforcing government power, but in comparison with Stalin's reign, the thaw proved liberating.

Reform crept into the film industry. New screenwriters were recruited; censorship was lightened. The biographical pictures and the artistic documentary went into decline. With "peaceful coexistence" now the official policy, cold war subjects were played down. Comedies and musicals returned to favor. The republics' studios revived. By 1957, production had risen to ninety-two films.

Many directors of the older generation continued to turn out didactic, doctrinaire works (**18.11**). But as "Make room for youth!" became a rallying cry, a number of recent graduates of the Soviet film school VGIK launched their careers. For example, Lev Kulidzhanov and Jakov Segel's muted *The House I Live In* (1957) traces the intertwined destinies of families in a housing complex before and during the war (**18.12**).

In 1956, Khrushchev boldly attacked Stalin's dictatorial policies. He singled out the cinema as a prime vehicle of the "cult of personality," denouncing those films that praised Stalin's military genius. As a result, some of the most revisionist films of the thaw treated the war genre in a new light. Grigori Chukhrai's first feature, *The Forty-First* (1956), portrays the developing sexual relation between a female soldier and her prisoner. The actor Sergei Bondarchuk made his directorial debut with *Destiny of a Man* (1959), which questions a Russian soldier's conduct in a Nazi concentration camp.

Two other war films represented a trend toward a "new humanism." *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957), directed by the veteran Mikhail Kalatozov, treats the home front unheroically. The protagonist is far from the positive heroine of Socialist Realism. While her fiancé is at the front, she has an affair with his brother, a weak black marketer, and suffers guilt over her infidelity. In the late 1940s, psychological conflicts had usually been considered bourgeois, but *The Cranes Are Flying* shows that they had gained official sanction. Kalatozov relies on the conventional deep-focus style (see 18.1), but he also experiments with handheld camerawork and slow-motion shots, techniques that would become common in the 1960s. The film's optical subjectivity and imaginary sequences link it to trends in the European art cinema. Its modern look helped *The Cranes Are Flying* win the Grand Prize at the 1958 Cannes Film Festival.

The sense of renewal was strengthened by Chukhrai's World War II drama *Ballad of a Soldier* (1958). The teenage infantryman Alexei is granted a brief furlough to visit his mother. In the course of his trip, he encounters people coping with the problems of the war and falls in love with a refugee girl. He reaches home so late that he must leave immediately. Because Chukhrai opened the film by telling

us that Alexei eventually died on the front, his final embrace of his mother (**18.13**) becomes particularly poignant. The effect is strengthened by the shot's visual parallel to the nightmarish tank attack in the film's opening (**18.14**). Alexei's fear of the war, his awkward kindness, and his sexual urges distinguish him from the stiff Bolshevik heroes of high Stalinism.

The Cranes Are Flying and *Ballad of a Soldier* display a conventional patriotism, a trust in paternal leaders, and mammoth battle scenes. Yet these and other films moved beyond the stern puritanism of earlier party dogma, offering "Socialist Realism with a human face." The postwar generation welcomed the sight of youthful sensitivity and passion on the screen, if only in the context of official doctrine and formulaic genres.

By the end of the decade, films from the USSR had regained worldwide prestige. In 1958, Part II of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* was released to great acclaim,

Ballad of a Soldier

18.13 The ending of *Ballad of a Soldier*.

Ballad of a Soldier

18.14 The opening of *Ballad of a Soldier*.

and an international critics' poll voted *Potemkin* the best film of all time. The works of Dziga Vertov and Alexander Dovzhenko were being revived. New films were winning renown. Although the thaw soon ended, Soviet cinema was somewhat rehabilitated in the eyes of the international film community.

Postwar Cinema in Eastern Europe

At the close of the war, the Soviet army occupied Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and the Eastern sector of Germany (to become the German Democratic Republic). Between 1945 and 1948, Communist governments arose in all these countries—first forming coalitions with other parties and then purging the coalitions of non-Communists and dissidents. By 1950, virtually all of Eastern Europe was under Soviet sway. Stalin saw these countries serving as "buffer states" against Western invasion. They would purchase Soviet products and supply the USSR with materials.

Emergence from Wartime Conditions In these "people's democracies," as in the USSR, one party ruled. The state collectivized agriculture, expanded heavy industry, and controlled wages and prices. Between 1945 and 1948, all the countries' cinema industries were nationalized, often on the basis of film units within the army, resistance forces, or partisan groups. Many filmmakers who had in the prewar period supported left-wing causes received posts in the new structure.

Some production facilities needed little rebuilding. Czechoslovakian studios had served as the basis for Nazi productions and were able to resume filmmaking easily. In East Germany in 1946, the Soviets established the state monopoly Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA), taking advantage of the fact that most of the prewar production facilities were located in the Eastern zone. By contrast, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia had few prewar film traditions. There the governments, with Soviet aid, had to build film production from scratch.

Initially, Eastern European industries copied the Soviet structure. Production was centralized, with scripts approved by a single hierarchical agency under the control of the party. Administrators assigned workers to projects. Bureaucrats demanded revisions at stages in the production process. Because distribution and exhibition were also under centralized control, the party might order the banning of a finished film.

One country deviated from this policy when it broke with the Soviet Union. In 1948, Marshal Tito, Communist ruler of Yugoslavia, launched a more decentralized,

market-oriented brand of socialism. Yugoslavian production was organized around independent enterprises consisting of artistic and technical workers. State subsidy of filmmaking was supplemented by a tax on admissions. Although the party censored finished films, personnel were allowed to initiate projects and move among enterprises. Yugoslavia's industry became the most "commercial" in Eastern Europe, entering into coproductions with the West and hosting runaway productions.

Again following Soviet precedent, the Eastern European countries emphasized professional film education. Advanced schools were started in Warsaw (in 1945; moved to Lódź in 1948), Budapest (1945), Belgrade (1946), Prague (1947), Bucharest (1950), and Potsdam (1954). Technicians also studied at the VGIK. Such standardized training was believed to guarantee both professional competence and obedience to ideology.

Before the Communist parties achieved full power, left-wing directors explored various options. Aleksander Ford's *Border Street* (Poland, 1948), for example, shows how ordinary people were drawn into becoming Nazi sympathizers. In East Germany, Wolfgang Staudte's *The Murderers Are Among Us* (1946), a major *Trümmerfilm* ("rubble film"), makes almost neorealistic use of the ruins of Berlin (**18.15**) in telling its story of a Nazi sympathizer who remains a powerful businessman. At the same time, however, Staudte draws on the indigenous expressionist tradition (**18.16**).

The Murderers Are Among Us

18.15 The "rubble film" *The Murderers Are Among Us*.

The Murderers Are Among Us

18.16 The return of expressionism: *The Murderers Are Among Us*.

Left-wing humanism of this sort soon fell into disfavor. Eastern European countries embraced Zhdanov's narrow version of Soviet Socialist Realism. The Soviet Union's Russian chauvinism found its Eastern equivalents in patriotic historical epics, revised to suit politically acceptable policy. Each nation developed its own variant on the war film, the collective-farm film, the factory-sabotage film, and the biography of the great national artist. To help its satellites adhere to the new policy, the USSR sent leading directors to shoot or supervise local productions and to suggest improvements in the domestic product.

Nevertheless, almost every country boasted some films that stretched or evaded the rules of Socialist Realism. In Poland, Ford's *Five Boys from Barska Street* (1954) and Jerzy Kawalerowicz's early work became noted for injecting humanist themes into the formulas. In Hungary, Zoltán Fábri's *Fourteen Lives in Danger* (1954) displayed a neorealist tendency in its account of trapped miners. Some filmmakers found cartoons to be a haven from Zhdanovism, and in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia outstanding animation studios developed (see Chapter 21). Often the nationalistic emphasis of Eastern European films of the period offered a degree of distance from Soviet policy: any patriotic story could be taken as asserting local pride in the face of Russian dominance.

Struggles under the Thaw Stalin's death and Nikita Khrushchev's policy of "de-Stalinization" created a thaw within many Eastern European governments. But citizens of these countries displayed a stronger spirit of independence and renewal than was common in the USSR. Eloquent intellectuals criticized the Soviet system. Most dramatically, people began to rebel. Strikes and riots broke out in East Germany and Poland; in 1956, Hungary teetered on the edge of revolution. Soviet tanks rolled in to quell the disturbances, but the upheavals revealed popular resentment of Communist rule.

The thaw brought a cultural renaissance to many Eastern European countries. Magazines, art groups, and experimental styles came forth to challenge official policies. Young people fresh from film schools could take advantage of the more liberal atmosphere. Intellectuals looked to the cinema to articulate new aspirations. Although Eastern European film did not pursue Western-style modernism until the 1960s, the cinemas of the thaw went further than their Soviet counterpart in loosening traditional narrative structure and in pursuing psychological and symbolic effects. During this period the most innovative and influential work emerged from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.

Czechoslovakia's thaw was relatively brief because many of the liberals who would have pressed for reform had already fallen victim to the Stalinist coup of 1948. Between 1956 and 1958, new trends emerged in the work of two older filmmakers. Ladislav Helge, a committed but critical Communist, made *School for Fathers* (1957), while Ján Kadár's *House at the Terminus* (1957) presented a study of social apathy under Communism. A younger film school graduate, Vojtech Jasný, presented a poetic treatment of the cycle of seasons in *Desire* (1958), while Václav Krŝka's *Here Are Lions* (1958) offered a modernist use of flashbacks told from the viewpoint of a man on an operating table.

Hungary's response to de-Stalinization was more radical, but in the cinema its thaw lasted only a little longer than that in Czechoslovakia. Between 1954 and 1957, three significant directors received international attention. Karoly Makk's first film, the period comedy *Liliomfi* (1954), not only proved a popular success but displayed sophisticated color design (**Color Plate 18.3**). Makk would prove to be one of Hungary's most important directors. Félix Máriássy's *Spring in Budapest* and *A Glass of Beer* (both 1955) introduced strongly neorealistic elements.

Particularly important were two films of Zoltán Fábri, a stage director who had moved into filmmaking after the war. His *Merry-Go-Round* (1955), a tale of reluctant peasants learning the joys of collective farming, displayed an energetic lyricism. Its zoom shots, brief flashbacks (both visual and auditory), quick editing, whirling camera movements, and slow-motion final images put it closer to Western modernism than to Socialist Realism (**18.17**). In *Professor Hannibal* (1956), Fábri offered a satirical study of Hungary under right-wing rule in 1921.

The Polish School Of the countries under Soviet sway, Poland proved to be the most hostile to Communism. Many Poles remembered that during the war Stalin had refused to back the Polish government in exile, creating instead a puppet regime and using Soviet troops to help the Nazis wipe out the underground Home Army. The Poles resisted agricultural collectivization, and sporadic outbursts of demonstrations and strikes became a regular part of urban life. The moderate leader Wladyslaw Gomulka proposed a series of reforms. Polish filmmakers took advantage of de-Stalinization to reorganize film production and reexamine the nation's history.

Merry-Go-Round

18.17 *Merry-Go-Round*: The heroine's ride on a carnival attraction is filmed from a variety of angles, accentuating her giddy happiness.

In May 1955, the Polish industry established the Creative Film Unit system, a shift away from the Soviet-style centralized bureaucracy. As in Yugoslavia, filmmakers could join a regional production unit, which would rent studio facilities from the government. Each unit would consist of an artistic director (usually a film director), a literary director to develop scripts, and a production manager to oversee filmmaking. The Creative Film Units, bearing such names as Kadr ("Frame"), Start, Kamera, and Studio, proved efficient; they also allowed film-school graduates to gain strong positions in the industry.

During the 1950s, the "Polish School" became the most prominent cinema in Eastern Europe. Aleksander Ford's *Five Boys from Barska Street* won a major prize at the Cannes Film Festival. A series of documentaries, called the "black series," undertook unprecedented social criticism. Jerzy Kawalerowicz, who had begun his career under Socialist Realism, offered the complexly constructed *Shadow* (1955), which raises the question of a man's death and then only partially explains it through a series of oblique flashbacks. More renowned outside Poland was Kawalerowicz's *Night Train* (1959); another exercise in narrative ambiguity, it has some affinities with the 1960s work of Ingmar Bergman. Many other directors, most of them young, came to form part of the Polish School, but two proved particularly influential.

Andrzej Munk, a Lódź Film Academy graduate, gained fame with *The Man on the Tracks* (1956). An elderly mechanic is run down by a train; a nearby signal lamp is broken; was he a saboteur? The film's plot interweaves the investigation with a series of flashbacks. As a result, events are presented out of chronological order, and some actions are shown several times. Common as this plot construction was in Hollywood and Western European cinema after *Citizen Kane*, it flouted official Socialist Realist aesthetics. Thematically, the revelation of the mechanic's good intentions makes *The Man on the Tracks* a critique of the Stalinist search for "wreckers."

Munk's *Eroica* (1957), a "Heroic Symphony in Two Parts," offers a similarly demystifying view of the war. The first part, a bitter comedy about a small-time con man during the Warsaw uprising, stands in sharp contrast to the more tragic story of Polish prisoners of war who

comfort themselves with illusions about heroism (**18.18**). Munk undertook a major film about the Nazi death camps. He died in an accident early in the shooting, but his collaborators edited the footage into *The Passenger* (1963), an elliptical but powerful film about a female camp guard. Flashbacks portray what she tells her husband: that she had secretly helped a prisoner. Further flashbacks reveal her memories of her actual cruelty to her victim.

Andrzej Wajda, the most famous Polish director, was also a graduate of the Lódź film school. After Wajda worked as assistant director to Ford on *Five Boys from Barska Street*, Ford served as artistic supervisor for Wajda's first film, *A Generation* (1954). Roman Polanski, who played a minor role, remarked, "The whole Polish cinema began from it."[2] Wajda's next film, *Kanal* ("Sewers," 1957), created far more controversy, winning a special prize at the Cannes Film Festival. *Ashes and Diamonds* (1959) won a major prize at Venice and became known as the most important film made in Eastern Europe.

As a teenager Wajda had served in the non-Communist underground Home Army. In the course of the trilogy, his representation of the underground evolves from ideologically correct criticism of the army (*A Generation*) through a grim celebration of its stubborn heroism (*Kanal*) to an ambiguous affirmation of the non-Communist Resistance (*Ashes and Diamonds*).

In the first film, Jacek, who dies in a crazy flourish standing atop a staircase (**18.19**), is condemned, but he remains attractive in his reckless romanticism. *Kanal*, made at the height of the post-Stalin thaw, is far more sympathetic to its young partisans. After the Warsaw uprising, they take to the sewers. The film's second half intercuts three groups' attempts to escape through the swampy labyrinths. In *Ashes and Diamonds*, an overtly anti-Communist partisan becomes a positive, even seductive figure. Maciek, a young man grown cold-blooded in the Resistance, assassinates a Communist representative and dies in a garbage heap, accidentally shot by a policeman. Although he is a political enemy, Maciek, with his machine gun, tight jacket, and dark glasses, became a charismatic figure for young audiences. Because of this role, actor Zbigniew Cybulski was known as "the Polish James Dean." (**Video 18.2**)

In the last two films, Wajda found a stylistic flamboyance to match his protagonists' bravado. *Kanal* won notoriety for its suspense, its violence, and its virtuoso style (**18.20**, **18.21**). In *Ashes and Diamonds*, Wajda's startling visual effects become symbolic motifs. Maciek's first victim, blasted so fiercely that his back catches fire, collapses against a church door, revealing the bombed altar behind (**18.22**). At the hotel bar, Maciek and his friend honor their fallen comrades by lighting glasses of alcohol, a secular equivalent of votive candles. At the end, killer and victim embrace in a grisly dance while fireworks ironically signal the end of the war (**18.23**).

Eroica

18.18 *Eroica*: comic action in the foreground while a fleeing refugee is shot in the distance.

A Generation

18.19 The Home Army partisan Jacek in *A Generation*.

Kanal

18.20 *Kanal*: the alternation of pitch darkness and explosions of light.

Kanal

18.21 The studio-built sewers enable Wajda to squeeze the characters close to one another or thrust them into the camera lens (*Kanal*).

18.22 *Ashes and Diamonds*: Christianity in wartime.

18.23 The climax of *Ashes and Diamonds*, with the fireworks echoing the fiery wound and the flaming drinks.

Critics have contrasted Wajda's romantic celebration of doomed heroes with Munk's more ironic, demystifying attitude. Both directors used the war film to question the official historical record and to address controversial topics—the nature of resistance, the Polish tradition of gallantry. But Wajda's baroque visual effects, his taste for suspenseful plots, and his ambivalent use of religious imagery made his films startlingly different from most of the Eastern European products.

As in the Soviet Union, the Eastern European thaws lasted only a few years. After Hungary's aborted 1956 revolution, its Union of Film Workers was disbanded, ending hopes for a new production system. In 1957, a Prague filmmakers' conference condemned recent Polish films and demanded that a single ideological line be followed. Polish filmmakers found their works scrutinized and sometimes suppressed. A 1959 conference of Czech filmmakers reorganized production policy and called for major films to be banned. Most governments tightened control of their film industries. Soon, however, even more nonconformist filmmakers would appear.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

During World War II, the Chinese civil war had moderated as both the governmental forces and the Communist revolutionaries battled the occupying Japanese army. After Japan's 1945 surrender, however, the civil war broke out anew. Despite US backing, Chiang Kai-shek's forces had to flee to Taiwan in 1949. Under Mao Zedong, the Communists established the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland. While America considered Chiang's Guomindong the legitimate government, the USSR recognized the PRC in 1949, providing it with aid and military assistance.

Civil War and Revolution

During the civil war, film production remained centered in Shanghai. Many scriptwriters and directors were sympathetic to the revolutionary cause, and they frequently ran afoul of strict wartime censorship. Still, some films provided models for the postrevolutionary cinema. Most important of these was the two-part *The Spring River Flows East* (1947–1948, Cai Chusheng and Zheng Junli). The film proved immensely popular, partly because it encapsulated the experiences of many Chinese citizens under the oppressive Japanese occupation.

Three hours long, *The Spring River Flows East* covers the years from 1931 to 1945 as it traces the fortunes of a husband and wife separated by war. Like many Chinese films, *The Spring River Flows East* resembles Hollywood films in its use of a lush symphonic score, skillful editing, and careful script construction. Scenes contrasting the husband's and wife's situations are carefully timed, as when a housewarming party for his new mansion is intercut with a scene of her family being evicted from their shack.

Shanghai filmmaking yielded another major film during the civil war, Fei Mu's *Spring in a Small Town* (1948). Fei had made some important films for the Lianhua company in the 1930s, including Ruan Lingyu vehicles (see China: Filmmaking Caught between Left and Right p. 225). His *Backstage/Frontstage* (1937), set among an opera troupe, presents the performances in a tableau style but depicts the personal dramas offstage with bold cutting and remarkable depth.

Spring in a Small Town is even more daring. A wife and her sickly husband live with his sister in a mansion now ruined by war. The husband's old friend, who is also the wife's former lover, comes to visit. As the friend and the wife are drawn to each other again, Fei presents their growing passion in distant, often chiaroscuro framings. They approach and withdraw through small gestures that

Spring in a Small Town

18.24 In *Spring in a Small Town*, Fei Mu often stages the former lovers' meetings with one figure turned from the other, suggesting their guilty hesitations about reuniting.

Crows and Sparrows

18.25 Two of the positive characters in *Crows and Sparrows*, a leftist clerk and a maid, lead a group of children in a song.

Crows and Sparrows

18.26 Fashionable clothes, liquor, and cigarettes mark the right-wing couple of *Crows and Sparrows* as corrupt.

only intensify our sense of their irresistible attraction (**18.24**). Although made for a left-wing studio, the film avoids propagandistic critique. Because of Fei's muted handling of the love triangle, as well as his free use of voice-over suggesting the wife's train of thought, many critics consider *Spring in a Small Town* the finest Chinese film ever made.

Two other important films spanned the transition between the civil war and postrevolutionary eras. Zheng Junli's *Crows and Sparrows* (1949) offers a cross section of prerevolutionary Chinese society by portraying the various inhabitants of an apartment block. The story contrasts the "sparrows," honest working-class people (**18.25**), with the "crows," the decadent right-wing party boss and his wife who exploit them (**18.26**). *San Mao, the Little Vagabond* (1949, Zhao Ming and Yang Gong), like *Crows and Sparrows*, encountered censorship barriers under the Guomindong government and was finished after the revolution. It centers on a suffering street urchin who gains hope when the revolution occurs. *San Mao* uses location shooting reminiscent of Italian Neorealism, and the boy's presence in actual celebrations of revolutionary victory lends the film a documentary power.

The Communist Party quickly nationalized the Chinese film industry. Many filmmakers welcomed the victory of the Communists in 1949, providing a continuity of personnel. The Beijing Film Studio was established in April; its head was Yuan Muzhi, who in 1937 had made the important left-wing film *Street Angels* (see China: Filmmaking Caught between Left and Right p. 226) and had studied filmmaking in Moscow. The new Ministry of Culture also formed the Film Bureau. Between 1949 and 1950, plans were made to centralize production, censorship, distribution, and exhibition. Although Western films were popular, theaters gradually dropped them from their programs. Because Chinese production could not meet the demand, films were imported from the USSR and other Communist countries.

Despite the propaganda value of film, officials in charge of the industry faced a problem. China was mainly agricultural, with 80 percent of the population living in rural districts. In 1949, the nation had only about 650 theaters, concentrated in the port cities and catering to a middle-class, educated audience. Millions of Chinese had never seen a movie and could not assimilate the ideas depicted in Soviet films.

Like the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Chinese government worked to expand the exhibition network and to make films that peasants, workers, and soldiers could enjoy. Directly after the Chinese revolution, the government created mobile projection units that toured films throughout distant regions. By 1960, there were about 15,000 such units. As filmgoers gained access to films, the number of annual admissions grew enormously, from 47 million in 1949 to 4.15 billion in 1959.

China was largely untouched by Western-style modernism. On the whole, Communist Chinese cinema reworked popular genres into political message films. Owing to changes in government policy, periods of control alternated with periods of relaxation, a cycle reminiscent of the freeze-and-thaw rhythm of culture in the USSR.

Soon after the Chinese revolution, officials obliged filmmakers to take Soviet Socialist Realism as their model. Soviet specialists lent their expertise as they did in Eastern European countries, and Chinese filmmakers traveled to Moscow to study the industry there. New personnel were trained, initially at a school attached to the Beijing Film Studio (opened in 1952) and later at the Beijing Film

Academy (1956). One noteworthy film of the era is *My Life* (1950, Shi Hui), structured as a series of flashbacks as an old beggar recalls his career as a policeman loyally serving various regimes since 1911. This panorama of his life provides the opportunity for many scenes of prerevolutionary oppression (**18.27**). As the hero dies, his son joins the revolution.

Strict control was relaxed somewhat during 1956 and 1957. Citing the ancient Chinese saying, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend," Mao Zedong invited constructive criticism of the government. This period of relative openness was comparable to the mid-1950s thaw in the USSR and Eastern European countries, although Mao quickly used the policy to mark out future "enemies."

Production had been slow to revive in the immediate postwar period, but it expanded under the Hundred Flowers Movement. Filmmakers adapted literary works by leftist authors of the prerevolutionary May Fourth School (named for a major series of 1919 protests). One such film, Sang Hu's *The New Year's Sacrifice* (1956), centers on a woman forced to work as a rich family's servant. Despite its unrelentingly grim story, *The New Year's Sacrifice*, like most Chinese films of the 1950s and 1960s, displays polished production values of a type usually associated with Hollywood, including elaborate studio-built exteriors and rich color cinematography. *Girl Basketball Player No. 5* (1957, Xie Jin) creates a more optimistic mood by focusing on young people learning to work together. Again, however, the unhappy prerevolutionary heritage is stressed because the team's coach had been fired during the 1930s for refusing to rig the outcome of a game. Such films hinted at a new range of subjects for filmmaking, but as criticism of the government led to a general crackdown, the Hundred Flowers Movement ended.

Official policy now declared the need for rapid growth in the Chinese economy, a policy known as the "Great Leap Forward." Among the results of this disastrous campaign was a famine, when peasants were forced onto collective farms and agricultural output plummeted. In the film industry, the Great Leap Forward led to unrealistic goals for the number of movies to be produced, often on impossibly low budgets. More positively, new emphasis on ethnic diversity led to the establishment of regional production centers, an action that would have long-range effects on Chinese filmmaking. While Beijing and Shanghai remained the main centers of production, during the years from 1957 to 1960, major regional studios were built in Guangzhou, Xi'an, and Chengdu. In addition, some significant films were made during the period. *The Lin Family Shop* (1959, Shui Hua) presents a shopkeeper caught between corrupt Guomindong officials and the invading Japanese. A polished studio production, *The Lin Family Shop*, integrates the family's drama with its examination of 1930s politics.

Mixing Maoism and Tradition

The end of the Great Leap Forward led to another period of openness during the first half of the 1960s. Film production expanded and attendance increased. Prerevolutionary films were revived, and the national film archive (established in 1956) began to preserve them. As the PRC was becoming less dependent on Soviet aid, directors stressed indigenous Chinese traditions.

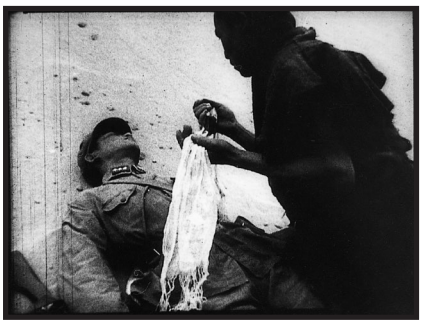
As a result of this new interest in Chinese life, more films began dealing with the nation's fifty-five minorities. Some films featured these minorities simply to display picturesque cultures. *Ashma* (1964, Liu Qiong), for example, is a lush widescreen musical based on a legend of the Bai minority. Other films showed a minority becoming united with the general population. In Li Jun's *Serfs* (1963), Tibetan peasants are oppressed by feudal landowners and religious leaders. The Chinese army liberates the serfs, with one soldier giving his life to save the hero. The hero pays tribute to him by spreading a traditional Tibetan friendship scarf across his corpse (**18.28**). Like many Chinese films, *Serfs* introduces an elaborate metaphor of revolutionary struggle; the protagonist is struck dumb by a Buddhist priest's curse. In the final scene, when the victorious crowd cheers Chairman Mao outside the hero's hospital room, he regains his voice, declaring, "I have so much to say."

There was also a renewal of the historical film. *Naval Battle of 1894* (1962, Lin Nong) is set during the Opium Wars and deals with an admiral trying to lead his men in a patriotic fashion in the face of government corruption. Skillful filming of elaborate miniature ships gives the film an epic quality. In the final scene, the hero defiantly steers his ship into the enemy fleet; this is intercut with waves crashing on a coast, metaphorically suggesting the rebellion soon to begin.

Many films continued to glorify the ordinary individual who escapes from oppression by discovering the revolutionary movement. The most important director of this era, Xie Jin, proved adept at combining melodramatic narratives with political concerns. His *The Red Detachment of Women* (1961) tells of a poor serf who escapes from her tyrannical master and joins a revolutionary brigade made up of women. At first driven by revenge, she gradually

My Life

18.27 A Chinese officer who serves the Japanese occupation government is seen surrounded by his instruments of torture in *My Life*.


Serfs

18.28 The climactic scene in *Serfs*, as the Tibetan hero honors the Chinese soldier who has saved him.

Two Stage Sisters

18.29 Chunhua, right, is shocked when Yuehong shows up backstage late and tipsy in *Two Stage Sisters*.

learns to fight for the good of society. *The Red Detachment of Women* is enthusiastically propagandistic, using stirring music, bold color, and energetic action sequences to create larger-than-life heroes (**Color Plate 18.4**).

Xie's best-known film in the West is *Two Stage Sisters* (1965). When the protagonists become theater stars, Chunhua remains true to her art, but Yuehong succumbs to luxury and drink (**18.29**). After the revolution, the sisters bring plays to the peasants. Theater becomes another metaphor for revolution; Chunhua has yearned to have her own stage, but at the end she realizes that "we now have the biggest one"—all of China.

Xie's narrative unfolds in a manner worthy of the glossiest American productions. "*Two Stage Sisters* has a Hollywood quality to it, I think, especially in its structure, the way I shot it, the way I put it together."[3] As in many Chinese films of the period, elaborate camera movements combine with vibrant color design. When Chunhua is pilloried for defending Yuehong from a landowner's lustful advances, a track-back reveals a crowd and a vast set (**Color Plate 18.5**).

Such attempts to combine entertainment, high-level production values, diverse subject matter, and ideological education ended abruptly in 1966. In that year, the sweeping political changes brought about by the Cultural Revolution drove many filmmakers into prolonged inactivity.

INDIA

Of the world's film output in the postwar years, a large share was contributed by India, and several films won international renown.

The national independence movement achieved victory when the British government divided its colonial territory, creating the predominantly Hindu nation of India and the predominantly Muslim one of Pakistan. Although the partition was far from peaceful, India became independent in August 1947. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru undertook many reforms, notably the abolition of the caste system and the promotion of civil rights for women. Nehru also pursued a policy of "nonalignment" that sought to steer a course between the Western and Soviet powers.

Even after partition, India remained diverse. As a republic, it was a union of states, each retaining its own culture, languages, and traditions. Most people were illiterate and lived in abject poverty. India's population was increasing, reaching 440 million in 1961. Although most people lived in the countryside, the wartime boom brought many to the cities.

A Disorganized but Prolific Industry

For both farmers and urban workers, cinema quickly became the principal entertainment. But Bombay Talkies, Prabhat, New Theatres, and other established studios owned no theaters and thus could not take advantage of the market (see A Highly Fragmented Business p. 224). After the studios collapsed as production firms, they rented their facilities to the hundreds of independent producers.

Banks avoided investing in motion pictures, so producers often financed their projects with advances from distributors and exhibitors. But this arrangement gave distributors and exhibitors enormous control over scripts, casts, and budgets. The result was a cutthroat market in which many films remained unfinished, hits produced dozens of copies

and sequels, and bankable stars worked in six to ten films simultaneously. Annual outputs soared, hovering between 250 and 325 films well into the early 1960s.

The government largely ignored this chaotic situation. Increasing taxes on filmgoing only intensified producers' frenzied bids for hits. A 1951 Film Enquiry Committee report recommended several reforms, including formation of a film training school, a national archive, and the Film Finance Corporation to help fund quality projects. It took a decade before these agencies were established. Another initiative of the early 1950s, the creation of the Central Board of Film Censors, had more immediate effects. Coordinating the censorship agencies in the major film-producing regions, the board forbade sexual scenes (including kissing and "indecorous dancing"), as well as politically controversial material.

Chandralekha

18.30 The drum dance in *Chandralekha*, from S. S. Vasan, the self-proclaimed Cecil B. DeMille of India.

The Populist Tradition and Raj Kapoor

The exhibition-controlled market, the absence of government regulation, and the strict censorship encouraged standardized filmmaking. Most of the genres established in the 1930s continued (see Mythologicals, Socials, and Devotionals p. 224), but the historicals, mythologicals (stories drawn from Hindu religious epics), and devotionals (tales of gods and saints) became less popular than the socials, which took place in the present and might be a comedy, thriller, or melodrama.

More grandiose was the historical superproduction, initiated by *Chandralekha* (1948), the biggest box-office hit of the decade. *Chandralekha* was produced and directed by S. S. Vasan, who set his tale of adventure and romance in huge sets and amidst massive crowds. Scenes like the spectacular drum dance (**18.30**) sent producers scrambling for even bigger budgets.

While regional production grew during the two decades after the war, the national market was dominated by films in Hindi, the principal language. After the war, Bombay (now Mumbai) was still the center of this "all-India" filmmaking. The India–Pakistan partition had cut the market for Bengali-language films by more than half, so Calcutta companies scaled back or began making films in Hindi. After *Chandralekha*, Madras (now Chennai), in southern India, became a production center, and by the end of the 1950s its output surpassed Bombay's; but it too turned out many Hindi-language products.

The postwar Hindi formula centers on a romantic or sentimental main plot, adds a comic subplot, and finishes with a happy ending. Since the coming of sound, virtually all Indian films had song and dance sequences. The Hindi film of the postwar era froze this tendency into a recipe: an average of six songs and three dances. Even melodramas and grim thrillers had the obligatory musical stretches. The idea was to create a "complete spectacle," an entertainment package to dazzle an impoverished, illiterate audience. Actor Dilip Kumar and actress Nargis became stars, while the music in the films became a major draw (see Music and Postwar Indian Film box).

Virtually all filmmakers worked in this popular tradition. Mehboob Khan specialized in socials before making the biggest Indian box-office success of its era, *Mother India* (1957), a melodrama of a rural woman's struggle to raise her family. V. Shantaram continued the populist tradition of the 1930s with films that criticized social inequities. His most famous film of the 1940s was *Dr. Kotnis* (1946), the story of an Indian physician in China. *Two Eyes, Twelve Hands* (1957) deals with a humane prison warden. Bimal Roy, the cameraman for the classic *Devdas*, moved to Bombay after the decline of the Calcutta film studios. His Neorealist-influenced *Two Acres of Land* (1953) celebrates the endurance of a rural family, while *Sujata* (1959) tentatively explores the issue of the "untouchable" caste.

Raj Kapoor's third feature, *Awaara* ("The Vagabond," 1951) became a stupendous success from the Middle East to the USSR. Over the next three decades, Kapoor was the master showman of the Hindi film. He directed and starred in much of his studio's output, becoming the most internationally known Indian star of his generation. (It is said that in the Soviet Union parents named their sons after him.) Raj was the head of a star dynasty including his brothers Shashi and Shammi, his sons Rishi and Randhir and many other performers.

Kapoor gave new formulas to the Hindi film. His scripts, often written by the veteran social critic K. A. Abbas,

MUSIC AND POSTWAR INDIAN FILM

It is often difficult to separate the history of cinema from the history of other media. In the United States, film was intricately bound up with theater, literature, radio, and television. Non-Western cultures displayed the same complex relations between cinema and other media. Indian cinema offers an intriguing example.

Out of the approximately 2,500 Indian sound films made before 1945, few lacked song sequences. After World War II, music became even more important. Radio disseminated movie songs, advertising forthcoming releases. With the breakup of the studios, independent producers clamored for successful songwriters and lyricists, who were often as well paid as the biggest stars. A composer might write for several dozen films in a single year.

Early on, Indian film scores borrowed Western symphonic motifs and orchestration, but it took the Hindi formula film to create the "hybrid score." A song or dance might draw on any musical tradition, from Greece to the Caribbean, Broadway to Latin America. The polyrhythms of Indian dance might blend with American jazz, an Italianate vocal line, and Spanish guitars.

In films of the 1930s and early 1940s, the actor had typically sung her or his own part. After the war, professional *playback singers* recorded the songs, which were then lip-synched by the actors during shooting.

Playback singers became as famous as the stars to whom they loaned their voices. Mukesh (whom Raj Kapoor called "my soul") was preeminent among male playback singers, while the outstanding female singer was Lata Mangeshkar (**18.31**), who recorded 25,000 songs (a world record) over a period of forty years. Her chirpy voice made her powerful enough to dictate terms to producers, directors, and composers.

Comic songs, love songs, songs of friendship or seduction, religious songs—each had its place in the film and a use for the public. Movie music pervades the culture. Film songs are played on religious holidays, in restaurants, and at weddings and funerals.

James Burke/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images

18.31 Lata Mangeshkar, queen of Indian film music.

praise the virtuous poor and satirize the undeserving rich. Kapoor contributes ingratiating comedy as an idealistic, Chaplinesque common man (**18.32**). Heart-wrenching melodrama centering on lovers or orphaned children alternates with farcical humor and erotic scenes. Kapoor portrayed himself as a populist entertainer: "My fans are the street urchins, the lame, the blind, the maimed, the have-nots, and the underdog."[4]

Such show-business hyperbole should not distract from the skill of Kapoor's direction, which displays a mastery of the classical narrative style. He was quick to keep up with Western trends: chiaroscuro lighting and low-angle deep focus in the earlier works; a glossier, higher-key look in the late 1950s; vibrant color location shooting in Europe for *Sangam* (1964). *Awaara* has a complicated flashback structure and includes a flamboyant musical fantasy sequence. Kapoor's ingenuity and craftsmanship, no less than his shrewd judgment of public taste, set new standards for the all-India film.

Awaara

18.32 *Awaara*: the ne'er-do-well Raj Kapoor sings to the rich woman, played by Nargis, another major Hindi star.

Swimming against the Stream: Guru Dutt and Ritwik Ghatak

A handful of directors pursued unconventional approaches. One major producer-director, Guru Dutt, struggled against the conventions of Hindi cinema. After leaving Calcutta's Prabhat company for Bombay, Dutt began as a director of urban romantic drama and comedy and eventually founded his own production company. Like Kapoor, he was in demand as an actor.

Dutt established himself as a major director with *Thirst* (1957). This romantic drama about a sensitive poet (played by Dutt himself) became an unexpected hit. Encouraged, he made *Paper Flowers* (1959), the first Indian film in anamorphic widescreen, but this melancholy tale of a film director's decline was a commercial failure. After producing another unpopular film, *Master, Mistress, and Servant* (1962), he died from an overdose of sleeping pills, either by accident or by suicide.

Dutt's dramas are dominated by a brooding romantic fatalism. The filmmaker in *Paper Flowers* fails in marriage, in his love affair with an actress, and finally in his vocation, becoming a drunkard whom his old studio will not even hire as an extra. Dutt's sorrowful depiction of the individual's losing battle with social forces proved ill-suited to the Hindi formula. His "serious" films hover between popular genres and "higher" drama.

This somber intensity informs Dutt's song numbers. Long tracking shots pick up the rhythm of the music and move into and away from his characters' sorrowful faces. In *Thirst*, the hero Vijay sings as he stumbles drunkenly through seedy streets, commenting cynically on the exploitation he sees: streetwalkers entice him, a mother sells her daughter to a passerby, a teenage prostitute is racked by a cough. Vijay's soliloquy becomes a wail of protest against urban misery (**18.33**, **Video 18.3**). In such sequences, Dutt pushes the Hindi film away from musical comedy toward the pathos of Western-style opera.

Like Dutt, Ritwik Ghatak was a Bengali, but his background marked him in a different way. Ghatak was shattered to see his homeland become part of Pakistan in 1947, and the experience of exile was at the base of several of his films. He became a member of the Indian People's Theatre Association, a left-wing movement that called for a return to indigenous arts and protest on behalf of the masses. In the early 1950s, Ghatak's interests shifted to cinema, a development intensified by his study of Soviet Montage directors and his viewing of Neorealist films at the Indian Film Festival of 1952.

Out of these impulses came his first film, *The City Dweller* (1953), which failed to get released. Returning to Calcutta after some scriptwriting in Bombay, Ghatak was able to make several films, including *Ajantrik* (*Pathetic Fallacy*, 1958), his children's film *The Runaway* (1959), and a trilogy on the Partition.

Thirst

18.33 Wandering through a brothel district, the poet Vijay sings of life's suffering (*Thirst*).

The Cloud-Capped Star

18.34 When the heroine of *The Cloud-Capped Star* discovers that the man she loves has betrayed their ideals, a close view of her shocked face is accompanied by an offscreen sound that resembles the swish of a whip.

Ghatak pushed genre conventions to extremes. In his only comedy, *Pathetic Fallacy*, a cabdriver treats his ancient Chevrolet as more human than the people around him. Ghatak's melodramas turned the Indian social film toward stark tragedy. He relished plot contrivances and lurid action. The climax of *Subarnarekha* (1965) comes when a prostitute learns that her next customer is her drunken brother; she slits her throat with a scythe. Ghatak saw his harsh melodrama as harking back to Indian theater traditions and to mythical archetypes.

Famous for making his sound tracks "thick," Ghatak used music symbolically. In the famous final scene of *The City Dweller*, the Communist anthem "Internationale" is heard playing at a political rally offscreen. In *The Cloud-Capped Star* (1960), the mother's worries are suggested by the loud crackling of rice boiling, and the heroine's suffering is emphasized by various offscreen sounds (**18.34**).

In the mid-1960s, Ghatak gave up directing for a time and took a teaching post at the Film Institute of India. "I barged into them," he said of his students. "I tried to win them over in favor of a different cinema."[5] The results would emerge in the 1970s under the rubric "Parallel Cinema."

A third unconventional figure was the Bengali director Satyajit Ray, for decades after the war the only Indian filmmaker widely known in European and Anglo-American film culture. His first film, *Pather Panchali* ("Song of the Little Road," 1955), won a prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and its sequel, *Aparajito* ("The Undefeated," 1956), captured the Grand Prize at Venice. Despite his roots in the broader Indian culture, Ray's films lie closer to the European art film than to the commercial Indian cinema, and most of his films were more popular abroad than at home. We examine the career of this filmmaker in Chapter 19.

Throw Me a Dime

18.35 *Throw Me a Dime:* child beggars risk their lives running alongside trains.

LATIN AMERICA

Although Latin American nations had long been politically autonomous, they still depended on the industrialized world to buy their raw materials and food and to sell them manufactured goods. Most of the continent was ruled by dictatorships and military regimes, and there was friction among the intellectuals, businessmen, traditional landowners, urban workers, and indigenous peasants. Populations usually consisted of a mix of indigenous, African, and European elements.

World War II forced many countries in the region to align themselves with the West. Governments formed alliances with the United States while accepting aid under the "Good Neighbor" policy. After the war, the major Latin American countries encouraged cooperation between local entrepreneurs and foreign investors. The state helped by funding or managing companies, and most countries moved back to import–export economies.

In the 1930s, Argentine films had been the most successful Spanish-language product in Latin America. During World War II, the government took a position of neutrality. As a result, the United States refused to ship film materials to Argentina but sent raw stock, equipment, technical advisers, and loans to Mexican firms instead. US policy, along with tactical errors by Argentine producers, enabled Mexico to become the production center of Latin America.

Brazil and Argentina

In the immediate postwar period, most films shown in Central America and South America came from the United States, a few European countries, Mexico, and Argentina. The only significant competition came from Brazil, where two studios—Atlântida of Rio de Janeiro and Vera Cruz Studios of São Paulo—dominated production. The vertically integrated Atlântida prospered by exploiting the popular *chanchada*, or musical comedy. Vera Cruz, despite its modern studio complex, went bankrupt in 1954.

Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina relied on genres that were counterparts to Hollywood cinema: musicals, family melodramas, action pictures, and comedies. Each genre, however, was adapted to each nation's culture. The cowboy became the Argentine gaucho; singers and dancers became performers in Rio's Carnival.

Conceptions of an alternative cinema emerged, however haltingly. As in Europe, ciné-clubs sprang up. Italian Neorealism also exerted some influence. Fernando Birrí, after studying at Italy's Centro Sperimentale, founded the Documentary Film School of Santa Fé in Argentina. He and his students made the documentary short *Throw Me a Dime* (1958; **18.35**). In Brazil, Nelson Pereira dos Santos made *Rio 40 Degrees* (1955), a semidocumentary about boys selling peanuts in the slums, and *Rio, Northern Zone* (1957), a biography of a famous samba composer. Pereira dos Santos has stressed that

> Neorealism taught us, in sum, that it was possible to make films on the streets; that we did not need studios; that we could film using average people rather than known actors; that the technique could be imperfect, as long as the film was truly linked to its national culture and expressed that culture.[6]

House of the Angel

18.36, *left* *House of the Angel*: gauzy imagery, film-noir lighting, and fluid tracking shots of body parts present the hazy present in which the heroine lives.

18.37, *right* The woman's past, filmed in canted angles and steep perspectives (*House of the Angel*).

Both Birrí and dos Santos would be central figures in Latin American left-wing cinema of the 1960s (see Chapter 23).

A European-style art cinema emerged most visibly in Argentina, where Buenos Aires was a center of cosmopolitan culture. Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, the son of a veteran director, made several features before *House of the Angel* (1957) earned acclaim at the Cannes Film Festival. Told as an ambiguous series of flashbacks, *House of the Angel* reveals a girl's personality stifled by political, sexual, and religious repression. She eventually succumbs to aristocratic decadence, living in a haze of memories and fantasies. Her suffocating life in the present is shot in a misty, mysterious style (**18.36**). Scenes in the past are filmed more crisply, but with an expressionist flavor (**18.37**)—not unexpected in a filmmaker who listed Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau, and Ingmar Bergman among his favorite directors.

After the success of *House of the Angel*, Torre Nilsson formed his own company. Most of his films were scripted by his wife, Beatriz Guido, a prominent novelist. His most renowned later work was *Hand in the Trap* (1961), which won a prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Of strongly European tastes, Torre Nilsson exemplified the international modernism characteristic of many Argentine artists.

Torre Nilsson's success occurred within the narrow confines of Argentine production. In the late 1940s, Juan Perón's government established protectionist measures, but in 1950 the government struck a bargain with the MPEAA that was similar to the pacts negotiated in Europe. US companies and local distributors and exhibitors benefited, but local production was hurt. After a coup overthrew Perón, the military government lifted all controls on imports. A 1957 law gave the industry substantial subsidies, which encouraged independent production. Although output dropped to fewer than thirty films per year, conditions encouraged Torre Nilsson's prestige cinema, which attracted elite audiences and foreign prizes.

Mexican Popular Cinema

By contrast with Argentina, the Mexican government vigorously supported a popular cinema. Thanks to US assistance, the industry came out of the war strong. The government exempted the industry from income taxes and created the National Film Bank to help finance production. In 1954, it created nationalized companies to market films at home and abroad. In 1959, the government bought the country's leading studio facility; in the following year, the major theater chain was nationalized.

For almost twenty years after World War II, the Mexican cinema was second only to that of the United States in the Spanish-speaking Americas. Working-class audiences in the growing cities were drawn to Mexico's genres: the *comedia ranchera*, featuring the virile singing *charro*, or cowboy; the melodrama; the *pachuco* musical, centering on zoot-suited hustlers; and the *cabaretera*, or brothel film. Cantinflas, "Tin Tan" Germán Valdez, and Dolores del Rio were the best-known Spanish-speaking stars in the world. Mexican feature output ranged from fifty to one hundred films per year. By the end of the 1950s, the industry was countering competition from television with wide screen, color, nudity, and new genre formulas, such as horror films and Westerns. Melodramas and crime films displayed outrageous plot twists and flamboyant visual techniques.

The National Film Bank supported only those projects deemed likely to turn a big profit, and the directors' union admitted few young people to the profession. Nevertheless, some directors stood out, especially during the golden age from 1946 to 1952. Most notable was Emilio "El Indio" Fernández. His wartime success, *María Candelaria* (1943; **18.38**), was followed by *Enamorada* ("In Love," 1946), an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Río Escondido* ("Hidden River," 1947), a didactic film about a teacher sent to reform a backward village.

María Candelaria

18.38 Deep-focus staging puts the tolling bell in the foreground of this image from *María Candelaria.*

Fernández's melodramatic plots showcased the cinematography of Gabriel Figueroa, who cultivated picturesque, deep-focus landscape shots similar to those in Sergei Eisenstein's *Qué viva Mexico!* Other important filmmakers include Matilde Landeta, the only woman director working in Mexico at the time, and Alejandro Galindo, who made somewhat left-wing social-problem films.

Audiences outside the Spanish-speaking countries knew the postwar Mexican cinema chiefly through the work of Luis Buñuel (see Surrealism p. 155). After nearly a decade of working in the United States at odd film jobs, Buñuel moved to Mexico. The twenty films he made there between 1946 and 1965 revived his career.

Buñuel quietly accepted the conventions of mainstream cinema. His first Mexican film was a star-filled musical; his second was a comedy. His filming schedules were seldom more than four weeks long, his budgets ludicrously small. He developed a straightforward technique that was the antithesis of Fernández's showiness. Buñuel's very poverty of means gave him considerable control; he wrote his own scripts, and he could even slip in bits from his memories or dreams.

By winning a prize at the 1951 Cannes Film Festival, *Los Olvidados* (1950) returned Buñuel to international prominence. Several of his Mexican films were distributed abroad, and in the late 1950s he participated in coproductions with France and Italy. After the scandal of his Spanish production *Viridiana* (1961; see A Spanish Neorealism? p. 326), he made two prestigious films in Mexico: *The Exterminating Angel* (1962) and *Simon of the Desert* (1965). Both were more modernist than anything he had done since *L'Age d'or*, but even his entertainment films preserved his Surrealist impulses. Yet he remained an international director, and *Los Olvidados* brought him major recognition as part of the postwar art-cinema tradition (see Chapter 19).

Surrealism had flourished in Latin America, and like artists in painting and literature Buñuel showed that it was compatible with indigenous traditions. Unlike Torre Nilsson, he created modernist films within mass-entertainment genres. He sought, as he put it, to make films "which, apart from entertaining the audience, would convey to them the absolute certainty that they do not live in the best of all possible worlds."[7] The unpretentious, high-output Mexican industry enabled him to achieve this goal several times in the postwar decades.

As postwar film culture expanded the international market for movies, many of the directors we have discussed in this chapter won fame outside their regions. A handful, such as Akira Kurosawa, Satyajit Ray, and Luis Buñuel, gained international recognition as innovative artists. The forces that shaped this trend, the search for film "authors," are examined in the next chapter.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in "Industry: Beauty from Osaka," *Newsweek* (11 October 1955): 116.
2. Quoted in Boleslaw Michalek, *The Cinema of Andrzej Wajda*, trans. Edward Rothert (London: Tantivy, 1973), p. 18.
3. George S. Semsel, "Interviews," in Semsel, ed., *Chinese Film: The State of the Art in the People's Republic* (New York: Praeger, 1987), p. 112.
4. Quoted in Bunny Reuben, *Raj Kapoor: The Fabulous Showman* (Bombay: National Film Development Corporation, 1988), p. 380.
5. Quoted in Haimanti Banerjee, *Ritwik Kumar Ghatak: A Monograph* (Pune: National Film Archive of India, 1985), p. 22.
6. Quoted in Robert Stam and Randal Johnson, "The Cinema of Hunger: Nelson Pereira dos Santos' *Vidas Secas,"* in Stam and Johnson, eds., *Brazilian Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 122.
7. Quoted in Francisco Aranda, *Luis Buñuel: A Critical Biography*, trans. and ed. David Robinson (London: Secker and Warburg, 1975), p. 185.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*: On Mizoguchi's style across his career: "Mizoguchi: Secrets of the exquisite image"

CHAPTER 19

Persona

ART CINEMA AND THE IDEA OF AUTHORSHIP

Sanshiro Sugata

Individuals and institutions affect history, but so do ideas. One of the most influential ideas in cinema history is the belief that the director is most centrally responsible for a film's form, style, and meanings. Most historians have made this assumption since at least the 1920s, but it was examined and articulated with particular force in postwar European film culture. The debates of that period, along with the films that were drawn into them, shaped filmmaking and viewing all over the world.

THE RISE AND SPREAD OF THE AUTEUR THEORY

Since the mid-1940s, French directors and screenwriters quarreled over who could properly be considered the *auteur*, or author, of a film. The Occupation period had popularized the notion that the mature sound cinema would be the "age of the scriptwriter," but Roger Leenhardt and André Bazin (see Postwar French Film Culture p. 328) claimed that the director was the main source of a film's value. These two critics wrote for the journal *La Revue du cinéma* (1946–1949), which championed Orson Welles, William Wyler, and other American directors.

An important statement of this line of thought was Alexandre Astruc's 1948 essay on *la caméra-stylo* ("the camera-pen"). According to Astruc, the cinema had achieved maturity and would attract serious artists who would use film to express their ideas and feelings. "The filmmaker-author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen."[1] The modern cinema would be a personal one, and technology, crew, and cast would be no more than instruments in the artist's creative process.

In 1951, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze founded the monthly magazine *Cahiers du cinéma* ("Cinema Notebooks"). Bazin quickly became its central critic. The first issue reviewed *Sunset Boulevard* as a Billy Wilder film, *Diary*

of a Country Priest as a Robert Bresson film, *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* as a Roberto Rossellini film, and so on. Soon younger *Cahiers* critics such as Eric Rohmer, Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, and François Truffaut began pushing the auteur approach to the point of provocation. The first scandal came in 1954, with Truffaut's essay, "A Certain Tendency in the French Cinema." He attacked the Cinema of Quality (see The Tradition of Quality p. 329) as "scenarists' films," works that revealed a lack of originality and a reliance on literary classics. According to Truffaut, in this tradition the screenwriter hands in the script, and the director simply adds the performers and pictures, thereby becoming only a *metteur en scène*, a "stager." Truffaut named a few genuine auteurs: Jean Renoir, Bresson, Jean Cocteau, Jacques Tati, and others who were more involved in the scripting stage. Fulfilling Astruc's dream of *la caméra-stylo*, these directors were true "men of the cinema."

In making the issue of screenwriting central, Truffaut was providing a rationale for *Cahiers*'s tastes. The journal had praised those European and American directors who composed or controlled their scripts. Truffaut's initial conception of authorship was also held by *Cahiers*'s rival magazine *Positif* (founded in 1952). Marxist and surrealist in its inclinations, *Positif* shared few of the *Cahiers* writers' tastes, but like them it concentrated primarily on directors who had a great deal of control over the scriptwriting process.

Some of the younger *Cahiers* critics went further, claiming that great directors in Hollywood had managed to express their vision of life without having any say in the screenplay. This hardcore version of auteurism proved controversial throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Bazin rejected the extreme views of his young colleagues, but critics elsewhere quickly took up the *politique des auteurs*—the policy of treating any director with a personal style or a distinct worldview as an auteur. In the early 1960s, American critic Andrew Sarris began promulgating what he called the "auteur theory" as a way of understanding US film history. The British journal *Movie* (founded in 1962) was auteurist from the start. While Sarris and the *Movie* critics admired the *Cahiers* European canon, they focused chiefly on Hollywood directors.

Once we have labeled, for example, Ingmar Bergman as an auteur, how does this help us understand a Bergman film? Auteur critics argued that we can examine it as a piece of "pure" creation, like a novel. It can be understood as expressing Bergman's view of life.

Moreover, considering Bergman an auteur allows us to seek common elements across his films. One motto of auteur criticism was Renoir's remark that a director really makes only one film and keeps remaking it. Recurrent subjects, themes, images, techniques, and plot situations give the director's films a rich unity. Knowing the auteur's other films may thus help the viewer understand the one at hand. In particular, the auteur critic was sensitive to how a director's work developed over time, taking unexpected turns or returning to earlier ideas.

Finally, auteur criticism promoted a study of film style. If a filmmaker was an artist like a writer or painter, that artistry was revealed not only in *what* was said but also in *how* it was said. Like any creator, the filmmaker ought to be a master of the medium, exploiting it in striking and innovative ways. Auteur critics distinguished directors by uses of camerawork, lighting, and other techniques. Some critics drew a distinction between filmmakers who emphasized staging and camera placement (the so-called mise-en-scène directors such as Max Ophüls and Renoir) and filmmakers who relied on editing (montage directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and Sergei Eisenstein).

AUTHORSHIP AND THE GROWTH OF THE ART CINEMA

Such ideas of authorship meshed smoothly with the growing art cinema of the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the prestigious directors of the period wrote their own scripts; all pursued distinctive themes and stylistic choices in film after film. Film festivals tended to honor the director as the central creator. In a commercial context, Tati, Michelangelo Antonioni, and others became "brand names," differentiating their products from the mass of "ordinary" cinema. Such name recognition could carry a film into foreign markets.

During the 1950s and 1960s, auteurist critics tended to focus on filmmakers who developed the cinematic modernism discussed in Chapters 16–18. Auteurism sensitized viewers to narrative experiments that expressed a director's vision of life. It also prepared viewers to interpret stylistic patterns as the filmmaker's personal comment on the action. Auteur critics were especially alert for ambiguities that could be interpreted as the director's reflection on a subject or a theme.

This chapter examines the careers of Luis Buñuel, Ingmar Bergman, Akira Kurosawa, Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, Robert Bresson, Jacques Tati, and Satyajit Ray. They are not the only auteurs in the history of cinema, of course, but they were also considered among the giants by critics promoting the theory of authorship during these decades.

Although each director was significant within his own country's cinema, none was wholly typical of the national trends and movements in filmmaking that came and went during his long career. All remained resolutely individualistic. Most have influenced later generations.

Nevertheless, these directors also typify broader tendencies in world film production. All made breakthrough films in the 1950s. All triumphed at film festivals and won international distribution, even gaining some foothold in the inhospitable American market. The institutions of film culture helped them to fame, and these directors' successes in turn strengthened the authority of coproductions, national subsidy programs, festivals, and film journals. Their careers highlight important trends in the postwar cinema.

In addition, these directors became the most celebrated exponents of 1950s and 1960s modernist filmmaking. Critics considered that each director had enriched film technique while also expressing an idiosyncratic vision of life. Because these directors all considered themselves serious artists, they shared auteurist assumptions with audiences and critics. Fellini echoed Astruc: "One could make a film with the same personal, direct intimacy with which a writer writes."[2]

During the 1960s and 1970s, auteurism helped create film studies as an academic discipline. Students and fans soon made the idea of authorship commonplace in the culture at large. Journalistic reviewers now usually assume that a film's primary maker is its director. Many ordinary moviegoers use a version of auteurism as a criterion of taste, not only for art-film directors but also for Hollywood filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg, Brian De Palma, Oliver Stone, and Christopher Nolan.

During the late 1960s and the 1970s, not all of our exemplary auteurs sustained their reputations. Most suffered critical and commercial setbacks (often resulting from their incompatibility with post-1968 political cinema). To a considerable extent, however, these directors regained critical acclaim after the mid-1970s, and in the intervening decades their work has continued to command attention.

LUIS BUÑUEL (1900–1983)

The Surrealist films *Un Chien andalou* (1928), *L'Age d'or* (1930), and *Las Hurdes* (1932) established Buñuel's distinctive personal vision, and most critics believed that he expressed it throughout his long career. For the critics of *Positif*, Buñuel attacked bourgeois values with images of savage beauty.

His Mexican films of the postwar decade showed that he could insert his personal obsessions into accessible comedies and melodramas. In *Viridiana* (Spain, 1961), the novitiate Viridiana attempts to establish her uncle's farm as a Christian community, but her plans fall prey to the cynicism of her uncle's son, Jorge, and to the rapacity of the beggars who swarm over the farm. Her ideals chastened, Viridiana joins Jorge and his mistress in a game of cards while a child tosses Viridiana's crown of thorns onto a fire. The protagonist's loss of innocence recalls that of the hero of *Nazarin* (1958), trying vainly to bring grace to a fallen world. As *Los Olvidados* (1950) had put Buñuel back on the map (see Mexican Popular Cinema p. 364), *Viridiana*, which won a major prize at the Cannes Film Festival, revived his fame during the 1960s—especially because he had made this blasphemous film under Francisco Franco's very nose.

In the 1960s, Buñuel moved toward more distinctly modernist experiments that had been sketched in *L'Age d'or. The Exterminating Angel* (1962) inexplicably entraps partygoers in a house for days, their polite manners decaying under pressure (**Video 19.1**). With *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1964) Buñuel began his "French phase," in which major stars and the scriptwriter Jean-Claude Carrière became central to his work. As he had used the Mexican commercial cinema for his ends, he began to exploit the conventions of the European art film: the mixture of fantasy and reality in *Belle de jour* (1967), the episodic narratives in *The Milky Way* (1969), the ambiguous, interwoven dreams of *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972), and the use of two actresses to portray the same character in *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977). Some of the films became substantial successes on the art-house circuit, and *Discreet Charm* won an Academy Award. At the end of his life, the elderly anarchist became that rarity, a modernist filmmaker whom audiences found entertaining.

Buñuel's third Mexican film, *Los Olvidados* ("The Young and the Lost"), centers on juvenile delinquents in a slum. Shot largely on location, it announces in a prologue that it is based strictly on facts. This encouraged critics to see it as a Mexican version of Neorealism. Yet Buñuel offers no warmhearted liberal optimism. Instead of the virtuous poor of *Bicycle Thieves*, he presents vicious youth gangs, unfeeling mothers, and bitter vagrants.

Buñuel charged the Italian films with lacking authentic "poetry." In *Los Olvidados*, the poetry is provided by disturbingly violent or erotic imagery. Neorealism never created as unsettling a scene as Pedro's dream, featuring floating chickens, images of his mother bringing him a slab of meat, and a shot of a murdered boy grinning and bleeding under the bed (**19.1**).

Los Olvidados

Mort en ce jardin

19.1, *left* The dead Julian chortling under the bed: Pedro's dream in *Los Olvidados*.

19.2, *right* *Mort en ce jardin* (1956): in the jungle heat, ants invade the Bible.

Of the major auteurs, Buñuel had the least distinctive style. His Mexican films adhere to the conventions of classical Hollywood cinema, and even his more self-consciously modernist films rely on simple staging, long takes, and panning movements to follow the actors. Yet this straightforward technique serves to heighten moments that disturb received notions of religion and sexuality.

In *Un Chien andalou*, Buñuel shows ants crawling out of a man's hand; thirty years later, they are gnawing their way through a Bible (**19.2**). In *Susana* (1950), a spider scuttles across a cross-shaped shadow on the floor of a prison cell. The frigid housewife who becomes a prostitute in *Belle de jour* is visited by a Japanese client who shows her a box, from which issue buzzing sounds; the audience never learns what the box contains.

Buñuel gives obsessions to his characters and then insidiously invites the audience to share them. In *The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de La Cruz* (1955), the hero is shown as a young boy, staring at a music box (**19.3**); he comes to associate this with the death of his governess, shot by a stray bullet at the window (**19.4**). As a grown man, he rediscovers the music box (**19.5**). This stirs in him the desire to kill sexually alluring women. He never succeeds, but after he has practiced strangling a mannequin and drags it away, Buñuel calmly shows us the dummy's fallen leg (**19.6**). We, not Archibaldo, make the association with the slain governess and find ourselves firmly within his morbid fantasy.

Buñuel's modernism emerges as well in his experiments with narrative construction. The films are full of repetitions, digressions, and movements between reality and fantasy. ("Don't worry if the movie's too short," he once told a producer. "I'll just put in a dream."[3]) His plots depend particularly on outrageous delays. *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* is a string of interrupted dinners. The ostensible action, something about corrupt businessmen smuggling cocaine, is buried in a series of bourgeois rituals gone awry: encountering a restaurant's staff gathered around the corpse of the manager, finding an entire army troop invading one's parlor. The film's surface consists of maddeningly banal conversations about tastes in food, drink, and decor. Whenever the story seems to have reached a climax, a character wakes up, and we realize that previous scenes—how many?—have been imaginary.

Most modernists attack narrative in order to turn the viewer's attention to other matters, but Buñuel treats narrative frustration as itself the basis of pleasure. The very title of *That Obscure Object of Desire* alludes to the impossibility of satisfying one's deepest wishes. Traveling on a train to Paris, the wealthy Fabert tells other passengers of his obsessive pursuit of the virginal Conchita. He gives her money, clothes, even a house of her own, and yet each time he tries to seduce her she eludes him. When he pulls away, she returns to humiliate him more brutally (**Color Plate 19.1**). Whenever Fabert pauses, the passengers urge him to continue; their avid curiosity makes them stand-ins for us. At the end of Fabert's story, Conchita appears on the train, and the cycle of frustrated desire resumes. *Obscure Object* can be seen as a reflexive parable that makes cinematic narrative akin to sexual flirtation. Buñuel's films at once criticize social conventions and play cunningly on those narrative conventions that maintain our fascination with storytelling.

INGMAR BERGMAN (1918–2007)

Like his mentor Alf Sjöberg (see Scandinavian Revival), Bergman came from the theater. After a stint as a scriptwriter, this prodigiously energetic man began directing in 1945; by 2003, he had made more than sixty films and directed even more plays.

Bergman's earliest films often centered on alienated young couples in search of happiness through art or nature (*Summer Interlude*, 1951; *Summer with Monika*, 1953). Soon, with a repertory of skillful performers at his call, he focused on the failures of married love—sometimes treated comically, as in *A Lesson in Love* (1954), but at other times presented in probing, agonizing psychodramas such as

19.3

19.4

19.5

19.6

19.3–19.6 Four shots from *Archibaldo de La Cruz.*

The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de La Cruz

Sawdust and Tinsel (aka *The Naked Night*, 1953). He moved to the Mozartian *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955); the parable-like *The Seventh Seal* (1957); and a blend of expressionist dream imagery, natural locales, and elaborate flashbacks in *Wild Strawberries* (1957; see 16.3). For many critics, Bergman's career climaxed with two trilogies of chamber dramas: first, *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *Winter Light* (1963), and *The Silence* (1963); second, *Persona* (1966), *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), and *Shame* (1968). Bergman was at the height of his fame. Critics wrote articles and books on his work; his screenplays were translated; his films won festival awards and Oscars. Even people who usually did not take the cinema seriously as an art form saw him as an exemplar of the film director as artist.

Soon, however, after some ill-judged projects and financial setbacks, Bergman could not get funding for his films. *Cries and Whispers* (1972) was paid for with his savings, some actors' investments, and money from the Swedish Film Institute. It had worldwide success, as did *Scenes from a Marriage* (1973) and *The Magic Flute* (1975). Pursued by tax authorities, Bergman abruptly began a period of exile and poorly received coproductions. He returned to Sweden to make *Fanny and Alexander* (1982), which was an international box-office triumph and winner of four Academy Awards. Bergman switched to directing television films, most notably *After the Rehearsal* (1984) and *Saraband* (2003).

Into his films, Bergman poured his dreams, memories, guilt, and fantasies. Events from his childhood recur from his earliest works to *Fanny and Alexander* (**Color Plate 19.2**). His loss of a lover shaped *Summer Interlude*, while his domestic life was the basis of *Scenes from a Marriage*. Bergman's private world became public property. In it dwell the nurturing woman, the severe father figure, the cynical man of the world, and the tormented visionary artist. They enact parables of infidelity, sadism, disillusionment, loss of faith, creative paralysis, and anguished suffering. The bright spot is often a faith in art—symbolized in *The Magician* (1958) as a conjurer's illusion (**19.7**).

The two trilogies of the 1960s solemnly undercut the religious and humanistic premises of the early work. God becomes distant and silent, while humans are shown to be confused and narcissistic. Even art, *Persona* and *Shame* suggest, cannot redeem human dignity in an age of political oppression. In the deeply pessimistic films of the 1970s, almost every human contact—that between parents and children, husband and wife, friend and friend—is revealed to be based on illusion and deceit. All that is left, again and again, is the memory of infantile innocence. This becomes the basis of *Fanny and Alexander*, a film set in a world that has yet to know the catastrophes of the twentieth century.

"I am much more a man of the theatre than a man of the film."[4] Bergman was able to turn out films quickly

The Magician

Sunset of a Clown

19.7, *left* Art as a mysteriously powerful spell (*The Magician*).

19.8, *right* The ringmaster badgered by his performers in a deep-focus long take (*Sunset of a Clown*).

Sunset of a Clown

19.9 Expressionistic dissolves open *Sunset of a Clown*.

The Seventh Seal

19.10 The Knight questions the "witch" in *The Seventh Seal*.

partly because he cultivated a troupe of performers—Eva Dahlbeck, Gunnar Björnstrand, Harriet Andersson, Bibi Andersson, Liv Ullmann, and Max von Sydow. His staging and shooting techniques have usually been at the service of the dramatic values of his scripts. His 1950s work applied deep-focus and long-take tactics to scenes of intense psychological reflection (**19.8**). After *Cries and Whispers*, he relied more on zoom shots. Throughout his career, he drew on the expressionist tradition (**19.9**, **19.10**).

Perhaps more distinctive is a technique that owes a good deal to the Kammerspiel ("chamber play") tradition of August Strindberg and 1920s German cinema (see Kammerspiel p. 92). Bergman pushed his performers close to the camera, sometimes letting them challengingly address the viewer (**19.11**). In the chamber dramas, Bergman shot entire scenes in frontal close-up against abstract backgrounds that highlighted nuances of glance and expression.

Brink of Life (1958) illustrates Bergman's adoption of theatrical technique. The plot centers on three women in a maternity ward during a critical period of forty-eight hours. The sense of a Kammerspiel world is reinforced by the first shot, which shows the ward's door opening to admit Cecilia, who is in labor. The film will end with the youngest woman, Hjördis, resolutely departing through the door toward an uncertain future. The women's pasts are revealed through dialogue. In addition, each actress is given one hyperdramatic scene. The first, and perhaps most impressive, presents Cecilia's reaction to the death of her baby. In a drugged haze, cradled by a maternal nurse, Cecilia recalls her worries about the delivery, accuses herself of failing as a wife and mother, and alternates among sobs, cries of agony, and bitter laughter. The monologue runs for more than four minutes, filmed in long takes and stark frontal close-ups (**19.12**, **19.13**).

Persona is perhaps the furthest development of this intimate style. In a little more than eighty minutes, Bergman presents a psychodrama that challenges the audience to distinguish artifice from reality. An actress, Elisabeth Vogler, refuses to speak (**Video 19.2**). Her nurse, Alma, takes her to an island. Having gained Alma's trust, Elisabeth then torments her; Alma retaliates with violence (**19.14**). Several techniques suggest that the two women's

Summer with Monika

19.11 *Summer with Monika*: "Have we forgotten," wrote Godard, "... that sudden conspiracy between actor and spectator ... when Harriet Andersson, laughing eyes clouded with confusion and riveted on the camera, calls on us to witness her disgust in choosing hell instead of heaven?"

Brink of Life

19.12 At the climax of Cecilia's speech, in a shot lasting almost two minutes, she claws forward into extreme close-up, her face starkly lit ... (*Brink of Life*)

Brink of Life

19.13 ... before falling back exhausted into the nurse's arms.

19.14, *left* *Persona*: Elisabeth and Alma struggle.

Persona

19.15, *right* The mysterious child gropes for an image that is a composite of the film's two protagonists (*Persona*).

personalities have begun to split. A hallucinatory image of a boy groping for an indistinct face further suggests a dissolution of identity (**19.15**).

Bergman frames the story within images of a film being projected, suggesting the illusory nature of a world that can so deeply engross the spectator. At a moment of particular intensity, the film image burns, yanking the audience out of its involvement with the drama. *Persona*'s ambiguity and reflexivity made it one of the key works of modernist cinema.

Bergman's roots in modern theater and his treatment of moral and religious issues helped convince Western intellectuals that cinema was a serious art. His films, and his personal image of the sensitive and uncompromising filmmaker, have played a central role in defining the postwar art cinema.

AKIRA KUROSAWA (1910–1998)

Kurosawa began his directorial career during World War II (see Ozu, Mizoguchi, and Kurosawa in Wartime), but he quickly adapted to Occupation policy with *No Regrets for Our Youth* (1946), a political melodrama about militarist Japan's suppression of political change. Kurosawa followed this with a string of social-problem films focused on crime (*Stray Dog*, 1949), government bureaucracy (*Ikiru*, "To Live," 1952), nuclear war (*Record of a Living Being*, aka *I Live in Fear*, 1955), and corporate corruption (*The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960). He also directed several successful jidai-geki (historical films), starting with *Seven Samurai* (1954) and including *The Hidden Fortress* (1958) and *Yojimbo* ("Bodyguard," 1961).

It was *Rashomon* (1950) that burst on Western culture, which greeted it as both an exotic and a modernist film. Drawn from two stories by the 1920s Japanese writer Ryunosuke Akutagawa, the film utilized flashback construction in an exceptionally daring way.

In twelfth-century Kyoto, a priest, a woodcutter, and a commoner take shelter from the rain in a ruined temple by the Rashomon gate. They discuss a current scandal: a bandit has stabbed a samurai to death and raped his wife. What really happened in the grove? In a series of flashbacks, the participants give testimony. (Through a medium, even the dead samurai testifies.) But each person's

Rashomon

19.16 *Rashomon*'s "three styles": the present-day scenes in the temple during the cloudburst rely on compressed wide-angle and deep-focus compositions.

Rashomon

19.17 The scenes of testimony in the hot, dusty courtyard employ frontal compositions. Witnesses address the camera as if the audience were the magistrate.

Rashomon

19.18 The sensuous forest flashbacks emphasize close-ups, dappled sunlight, and mazelike tangled brush.

version differs drastically from the others'. When we return to the present and the three men waiting out the rain at the Rashomon gate, the priest despairs that humans will ever tell the truth. The woodcutter abruptly reveals that he had witnessed the crimes and relates a fourth, contradictory version.

Kurosawa's staging and shooting sharply demarcate the film's three major "time zones" (**19.16–19.18**). These stylistic differences make for great clarity of exposition, but they do not help the viewer determine exactly what happened in the grove. As with *Paisan* and other Neorealist works, the film does not attempt to tell us everything; like *Bicycle Thieves*, *Voyage to Italy*, and some of Bergman's works, Kurosawa's film leaves key questions unanswered at the end. *Rashomon*'s unreliable flashbacks were a logical step beyond 1940s Hollywood experimentation in flashback technique. By presenting contradictory versions of a set of events, *Rashomon* made a significant contribution to the emerging tradition of art cinema.

Kurosawa became the most influential Asian director in film history. His use of slow-motion cinematography to portray violence eventually became a cliché. Several of his films were remade by Hollywood, and *Yojimbo* spawned the Italian Western. George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977) derived part of its plot from *Hidden Fortress*.

Throughout his career, he had been considered the most "Western" of Japanese directors, and, although this is not completely accurate, his films proved highly accessible abroad. He drew many of his stories from Western literature. *Throne of Blood* and *Ran* ("Chaos," 1985) are based on Shakespeare; *High and Low* (1963) is based on a detective novel by Ed McBain (**Video 19.3**). Kurosawa's films have strong narrative lines and a good deal of physical action, and he admitted that John Ford, Abel Gance, Frank Capra, William Wyler, and Howard Hawks influenced him.

Critics looking for an authorial vision of the world found in Kurosawa's work a heroic humanism close to Western values. Most of his films concentrate on men who curb selfish desires and work for the good of others. This moral vision informs such films as *Drunken Angel* (1948), *Stray Dog*, and *Ikiru*. It is central to *Seven Samurai*, in which a band of masterless swordfighters sacrifice themselves to defend a village from bandits. Often Kurosawa's hero is an egotistical young man who must learn discipline and self-sacrifice from an older, wiser teacher. This theme finds vivid embodiment in *Red Beard* (1965), in which a gruff, dedicated doctor teaches his intern devotion to poor patients.

After *Red Beard*, however, Kurosawa's films slide into pessimism. *Dodes'kaden* (1970), made after he attempted suicide, presents the world as a bleak tenement community holding no hope of escape. *Kagemusha* and *Ran* depict social order as torn by vain struggles for power. Yet *Dersu Uzala* (1975) reaffirms the possibility of friendship and charitable commitment to others, and *Madadayo* (1993) offers a poignant farewell to a teacher's humanistic ideals.

To all his projects, Kurosawa brought that pluralistic approach to cinematic technique typical of Japanese filmmakers. His first film, *Sanshiro Sugata* (1943), displays immense daring in editing, framing, and slow-motion cinematography (see Ozu, Mizoguchi, and Kurosawa in Wartime p. 223). Soon after the war, perhaps as a result of exposure to a variety of American films, Kurosawa adopted a Wellesian shot design, with strong deep focus (**19.19**). He later explored ways in which telephoto lenses could create nearly abstract compositions in the widescreen format (**19.20**).

He also experimented with violent action. In *Seven Samurai*, the combat scenes were filmed with several cameras. The cameramen used very long telephoto lenses and

Ikiru

19.19 The bureaucrat Watanabe waiting for death in *Ikiru*.

Red Beard

19.20 In *Red Beard*, the young intern and a cook (both in the foreground) watch a disturbed girl try to make friends with a little boy amid a forest of quilts hung out to dry. The long lens flattens the space and creates an abstract pattern of slots and undulations.

Sanshiro Sugata

19.21–19.23 Axial cutting enlarges a character abruptly in *Sanshiro Sugata*.

panned to follow the action, as if covering a sporting event. Kurosawa began to apply the multiple-camera technique to dialogue. His revival of multiple-camera shooting (a commonplace technique of the early sound era; see Early Sound Technology and the Classical Style) allowed the actors to play the entire scene without interruption and to forget that they were being filmed. Multiple-camera technique has become far more common since Kurosawa began using it.

Throughout his career, Kurosawa was noted for his frantically energetic editing. In *Sanshiro Sugata*, he boldly cuts into details without changing the angle, yielding a sudden enlargement effect (**19.21–19.23**). When using the multiple-camera, telephoto-lens strategy, however, he has a penchant for disorienting changes of angle. These editing strategies can dynamize tense or violent confrontations.

There is a more static side to Kurosawa's style as well. His 1940s films include some extremely long takes, and his later works often utilize rigidly posed compositions, as in the startling opening of *Kagemusha*, which holds for several minutes on three identical men (**Color Plate 19.3**). This tendency toward abstract composition can be seen in his settings and costumes. Early in his career, Kurosawa depicted environments in extremely naturalistic ways; no film was complete without at least one scene in a downpour and another in a gale. But this tendency steadily yielded to a more stylized mise-en-scène. After *Dodes'kaden*, the orchestration of color in the image became Kurosawa's primary concern. Originally trained as a painter, he lavished attention upon vibrant costumes and stark set design. In *Kagemusha* and *Ran*, the precise compositions of the early works give way to sumptuous pageantry captured by incessantly panning cameras.

Kurosawa's technical brilliance and his kinetic treatment of spectacular action won the reverence of Hollywood's "movie brat" generation. George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola helped finance *Kagemusha;* Martin Scorsese portrayed Vincent Van Gogh in *Akira Kurosawa's Dreams* (1990). More generally, his preoccupation with human values comprehensible to audiences around the world made him a prominent director for decades.

FEDERICO FELLINI (1920–1993)

In 1957, after Fellini had made five feature films, André Bazin could already detect a web of recurring imagery. He pointed out that the angel statue of *I Vitelloni* ("The Young Calves," 1953, **19.24**) reappears as the angelic wire-walking Fool in *La Strada* ("The Road," 1954; **19.25**). In other films, the angel's wings are associated with bundles of sticks carried on people's backs. Bazin's conclusion—"There is no end to Fellini's symbolism"[5]—is amply proved by the director's whole career. The films return compulsively to the circus, the music hall, the desolate road, deserted squares at night, and the beach. *La Strada* begins by the seashore and ends there as well, with Zampano, who has left Gelsomina for dead, sobbing alone. In *La Dolce Vita* ("The Sweet Life," 1960), Marcello is in almost exactly the same posture as dawn breaks over the sea and he cannot reply to the little girl who is calling him.

There are recurring characters as well, such as the holy fool, the narcissistic male, the nurturing mother figure, the voluptuous whore. There are invariably parades, parties, shows—all usually followed by bleak dawns and dashed illusions. However, there are the odd, privileged moments that offer a glimpse of mystery (**19.26**, **19.27**). Echoing Renoir, Fellini admits, "I seem to have always turned out the same film."[6]

Fellini's ability to create a personal world on film was central to his fame during the 1950s and 1960s. *I Vitelloni* brought him to international attention, and *La Strada* became a huge success, winning the Academy Award in 1956. *La Dolce Vita* received the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and its depiction of the orgiastic lifestyles of the idle rich shocked and tantalized audiences around the world. It became one of the most profitable films Italy ever exported. With *8½* (1963), another Oscar winner, Fellini created perhaps the liveliest modernist film of the era, a reflexive study of a film director unable to make the film he has planned. After *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), a counterpart to *8½* told from a woman's viewpoint, Fellini adapted Petronius's *Satyricon* (1969). This episodic tale established the new Fellini mode: teeming, grotesque spectacle reminiscent of commedia dell'arte, often lacking a linear narrative. He worked steadily throughout the 1970s and 1980s, always to a chorus of controversy. With Bergman, he became the most widely seen and intensively interpreted of European filmmakers.

The films are frankly autobiographical. Fellini's school days inform the flashback scenes in *8½*; his adolescence in Rimini shapes *I Vitelloni*, the story of a band of young loafers, and *Amarcord* (1974), a lyrical treatment of a small town. His childhood fascination with Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, and the Marx Brothers emerges repeatedly, notably in the mimed comedy of Giulietta Masina's performances. Yet like Guido, the hero of *8½*, Fellini claimed not to know where memory ends and imagination begins. He offers not literal autobiography but personal mythology: a life mixed with fantasy (**Video 19.4**).

Up to *La Dolce Vita*, the films were firmly rooted in the real world, albeit one that harbored mysteries. With *8½* and *Juliet*, the realm of dream and hallucination opened up. In an important sense, the protagonist of each Fellini film became Fellini himself—or, rather, his imagination. *Satyricon* is a series of fragments unified by a phantasmagoric vision. He launched extravagant spectacles—*The Clowns* (1970), *Roma* (1972), *Casanova* (1976), *City of Women* (1980), *The Ship Sails On* (1983)—each announcing itself as revealing more of the director's obsessions, fears, and aspirations. For some critics, the films became increasingly narcissistic exercises; for others, they carried the consistent theme that only through the creative imagination could people find freedom and happiness.

There is also a less personal side to Fellini's work. Several of the films since the late 1950s fused autobiography and fantasy with an examination of social history. *La Dolce Vita* juxtaposes ancient Rome, Christian Rome, and modern Rome, and it judges contemporary life decadent. *Satyricon* draws the same analogy, comparing the emotionally empty protagonists to hippies. For Fellini, *Amarcord* is not simply a placid look back at his boyhood but also an attempt to show how Benito Mussolini's regime fulfilled Italians' immature needs. *Casanova*'s obsessed, mechanical sexuality can be seen as portraying the protagonist as a proto-fascist. Like Bergman, Kurosawa, and Ray, Fellini offers social criticism in the name of artistic sensitivity and human values. This attitude emerges clearly in *Ginger and Fred* (1986), which attacks the superficiality of television and celebrates the more intimate performance associated with a dancing team from the 1930s (consisting of Fellini's definitive couple, Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni).

Fellini's images depend on intricately staged action, and he proved a master of flamboyant costume, decor, and crowd movement (**Color Plate 19.4**). He happily continued the Italian tradition of postsynchronization, preferring to control all dialogue and sound effects after filming. The canonical Fellini scene—a vast procession accompanied by lilting Nino Rota music—does not permit the direct sound recording favored by Bresson.

Like many of the auteurs who came to prominence in the 1950s, Fellini steadily turned away from interesting the

I Vitelloni

La Strada

19.24, *left* The holy fool worships the stolen statue in *I Vitelloni*.

19.25, *right* *La Strada*: Gelsomina and the acrobatic angel.

La Strada

Nights of Cabiria

19.26, *left* *La Strada*: Gelsomina imitates a tree.

19.27, *right* Teenagers scamper out of the forest to console the heroine of *Nights of Cabiria* (1956).

Nights of Cabiria

Amarcord

19.28, *left* Cabiria shares a look of hope with the viewer (*Nights of Cabiria*).

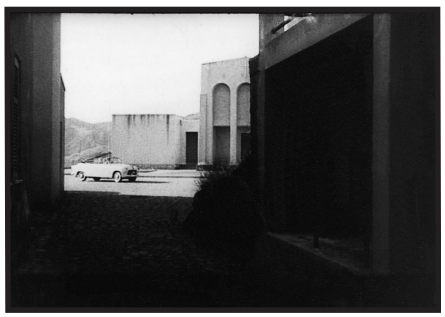
19.29, *right* One of *Amarcord*'s many storytellers.

audience in a story and focused on the act of storytelling. At the end of *Nights of Cabiria*, the heroine, rescued by the dancing youths, smiles shyly at the camera (**19.28**) and then glances away, as if uncertain of our existence. By *Amarcord*, Fellini structures the film around characters casually chatting with us (**19.29**). "It seems to me that I have invented almost everything: childhood, characters, nostalgias, dreams, memories for the pleasure of being able to recount them."[7]

MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI (1912–2007)

Antonioni's fame emerged somewhat later than Fellini's, and his pessimistic, cerebral films stood out in sharp contrast to Fellini's life-affirming extravagance. Nonetheless, throughout the 1960s, he too helped define European cinema's "high modernism."

Antonioni served his apprenticeship in Italian Neorealism with several short films and five features running from *Story of a Love Affair* (1950; see **Video 16.3**) to *Il Grido* ("The Outcry," 1957). His most famous film was *L'Avventura* ("The Adventure," 1960); though booed at the Cannes Film Festival, it became an international success. *L'Avventura* was followed by *La Notte* ("The Night," 1961), *L'Eclisse* (*Eclipse*, 1962), and *Red Desert* (1964), the entire tetralogy constituting an exploration of contemporary life. By the mid-1960s, as one of the half-dozen most prominent directors in the world, Antonioni accepted a contract with MGM to make three films in English. The first, *Blow-Up* (1966), amply justified Hollywood's faith, earning praise and profits around the world. But *Zabriskie Point* (1969), Antonioni's rendition of student activism, was a financial disaster. After *The Passenger* (1975), Antonioni returned to Italy, breaking several years of silence


L'Avventura

19.30 The modern city becomes a labyrinth that dominates human beings (*L'Avventura*).

Story of a Love Affair

19.31 A reminder of the fatal elevator looms over the couple in *Story of a Love Affair*.

Il Grido

19.32 The itinerant worker confronts his wife in *Il Grido*.

with *The Mystery of Oberwald* (1981), *Identification of a Woman* (1982), and *Beyond the Clouds* (1995, codirected with Wim Wenders). His last project was an episode for the film *Eros* (2004).

Antonioni's historical significance rests principally on his early and middle-period films. During the first decade, he helped turn Italian Neorealism toward intimate psychological analysis and a severe, antimelodramatic style. His films depicted an anomie at the center of Europe's booming economy, a mood also depicted in postwar Italian fiction. Antonioni's early portrayals of the rich could be seen as extending the social criticism inherent in the idea of Neorealism. But Antonioni found numb, aimless people in the working class as well. The sluggish, inarticulate drifter of *Il Grido* is far from the struggling hero of *Bicycle Thieves*, who at least has his wife and son to sustain him.

With the films of the early 1960s, what Andrew Sarris called "Antoniennui" deepens. *L'Avventura* undertakes a panoramic survey of the upper classes' alienation from the world they have made (**19.30**). Vacations, parties, and artistic pursuits are vain efforts to conceal the characters' lack of purpose and emotion. Sexuality is reduced to casual seduction, enterprise to the pursuit of wealth at any cost. Technology has taken on a life of its own; an electric fan or a toy robot has a more vivid presence than the people who use it. ("It is things, objects, and materials that have weight today."[8]) One cliché of Antonioni criticism—the "lack of communication"—takes on its significance within his broader critique of how all personal relations have shriveled in the contemporary world.

These thematic preoccupations are expressed in innovative narrative forms and stylistic patterns. *L'Avventura* moved toward boldly modernist storytelling. Wealthy vacationers descend on a Mediterranean island, and Anna wanders off. Her friends cannot find her. Her lover, Sandro, and her friend, Claudia, return to the mainland to continue the search. Gradually, as they become attracted to one another, Anna is forgotten. What starts as a detective story becomes the tale of an ambivalent love affair haunted by guilt and uncertainty.

Other films take different narrative paths. *La Notte* covers a twenty-four-hour period, tracing the ways in which a couple's random encounters illuminate their disintegrating marriage. *Red Desert* presents an industrial landscape pervaded by ambiguity, in which the washed-out color schemes may be attributed either to the disturbed psyche of the heroine, Giuliana, or to Antonioni's vision of the blighted modern world. All the films utilize a slow rhythm, with many *temps morts* (intervals of "dead time") between events. Scenes begin a bit before the action starts and linger after the action has ended. And all four films conclude with "open endings"—perhaps most notably *L'Eclisse*'s series of empty urban spaces where the two lovers might yet meet.

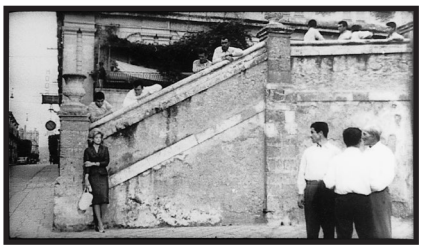
From the start of his career, Antonioni demonstrated a mastery of deep focus (**19.31**) and the long take with camera movement. The early works also pioneered the possibility of concealing the characters' reactions from the audience, often by means of setting (**19.32**; see also 16.4). *L'Avventura* systematically extends this strategy (**19.33**). The film's last image is an extreme long shot of the couple dwarfed by a building, staring out at Mount Etna, their backs resolutely to the viewer (**19.34**). The viewer can hardly feel close to characters presented so dispassionately.

A similar detachment results from Antonioni's increasingly abstract compositions. He reduces human beings to masses and textures, figures on a ground (**19.35**). With *Red Desert*, Antonioni's first color film, he pushed his abstraction further. He painted fruit gray (**Color Plate 19.5**); objects became blobs or slabs of color. In some scenes, space is flattened by long lenses; in others, it becomes cubistic, as blocks and wedges of color fracture the shot (**Color Plate 19.6**).

In *Blow-Up*, the distancing effects of the previous films cooperate with a full-scale reflexivity. Thomas

19.33 *L'Avventura* often presents characters turned from the camera, rendering emotional states uncertain.

19.34 *L'Avventura*: the ending.



19.35 *L'Avventura*: two strong diagonals divide the frame and isolate Claudia.

accidentally photographs a couple in the park; has he also filmed a murder? The more he enlarges his pictures, the more granular and abstract they become. Within a detective-story framework, the film probes the illusory basis of photography and suggests that its ability to tell the unvarnished truth is limited. Like *8½* and *Persona*, *Blow-Up* became a central example of modern cinema's interrogation of its own medium.

Antonioni's muted dramatization of shallow or paralyzed characters found a sympathetic response in an era that also welcomed existentialism. Perhaps more than any other director, he encouraged filmmakers to explore elliptical and open-ended narrative. Juan Bardem, Miklós Jancsó, and Theo Angelopoulos learned from his distinctive style. Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation* (1974) and Brian De Palma's *Blow-Out* (1981) derive directly from *Blow-Up.* Critics identified film artistry with the silences and vacancies of Antonioni's world, and many viewers saw their own lives enacted there.

ROBERT BRESSON (1907–1999)

Bresson's reputation rests upon a comparatively small body of work. After his first two significant films, *Les Anges du péché* (1943) and *Les Dames du Bois du Boulogne* (1945; see Films of the Occupation Period p. 263), he made only eleven films in forty years, most notably *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951), *A Man Escaped* (1956), *Pickpocket* (1959), *Au Hasard Balthasar* ("At Random Balthasar," 1966), *Mouchette* (1967), *Four Nights of a Dreamer* (1972), *Lancelot du Lac* (*Lancelot of the Lake*, 1974), and *L'Argent* ("Money," 1983). Yet, from the early 1950s on, Bresson was one of the most respected directors in the world. Championed by the *Cahiers* critics, praised by Sarris and the *Movie* group, his rigorous, demanding films display an internal consistency and a stubbornly individualistic vision of the world.

Bresson's reliance on literary texts gave him some credibility in the period when the Cinema of Quality reigned. Yet there is nothing particularly literary about the finished product. His work perfectly exemplifies Astruc's *la caméra-stylo* aesthetic: he took literary works as pretexts, but he composed by purely filmic means. Bresson was fond of contrasting what he called "cinematography"—"writing through cinema"—with "cinema," or the ordinary filmmaking that is, he insisted, merely photographed theater.[9]

Bresson concentrated on sensitive people struggling to survive in a hostile world. His two 1940s features weave vengeful intrigues around innocent victims. With *Diary of a Country Priest* and on through the early 1960s, a long second phase emerged in his work. The films presented austere images and subdued acting. In most of these works, suffering is redeemed to one degree or another. The country priest dies with the realization "All is grace"; in *A Man Escaped*, Fontaine breaks out of a Nazi prison by trusting in his cellmate; after a fascination with crime, the central character in *Pickpocket* learns to accept a woman's love. Bresson's interest in spiritual subjects struck a chord during the revival of Catholicism in postwar France. During this phase, he gained his international reputation as the great religious director of postwar cinema.

After the mid-1960s, his films became far more pessimistic. Viewers who had identified Bresson as a "Catholic" director were puzzled by his turn to the secular, even sexual, problems of young people in modern society. Now his protagonists were led to despair and even suicide. In *Balthasar*, Marie dies after a juvenile gang has stripped and beaten her. Mouchette and the protagonists of *Une Femme douce* ("A Gentle Woman," 1969) and *The Devil Probably* (1977) kill themselves. In *L'Argent*, an unjust accident hurls a young man into prison and toward unreasoning murder. Now Christian values offer no solace. The quest for the Grail in *Lancelot du Lac* fails; chivalry becomes a heap of bloodied armor.

However bleak they may be, Bresson's films radiate mystery. It is difficult to understand his characters because they are typically examined from the outside. The performers—Bresson called them his "models"—are often

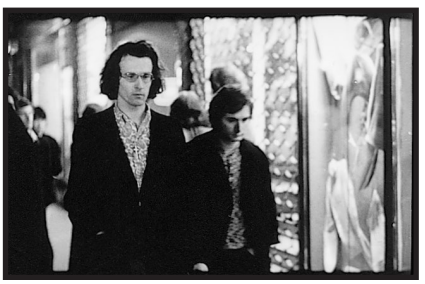
Pickpocket

19.36 *Pickpocket*: Michel's arm seems almost cut free from his body as it moves freely toward purses and pockets.

nonactors or amateurs. They are preternaturally still and quiet, breaking their silence with a clipped word or a brief gesture. In this cinema, a sudden raising of the eyes becomes a significant event: a shared look, a climax. The models are often filmed from behind, or in close-ups that fragment their bodies (**19.36**). In addition, Bresson's abrupt cutting, short scenes, sudden track-ins or track-outs, and laconic sound tracks demand the viewer's utmost concentration. The reward is a subtle balance between a penetration of the characters' experiences and a sense that their inner states remain elusive and mysterious.

After *Diary of a Country Priest*, Bresson began to avoid long shots. He typically created a scene's space by showing small portions of it and linking shots through characters' eyelines (**19.37**, **19.38**). At other times, his tightly framed camera movements suggest action by concentrating on details. In one scene from *Mouchette*, for instance, by showing no faces, Bresson calls attention to Mouchette's discouraged gait and her shabby clothes (**19.39–19.42**).

Bresson also needs no long shot of Mouchette's school because he has evoked the setting through the sounds of the school bell and the students' chatter. "Every time that I can replace an image by a sound I do so."[10] Against a background of pervasive silence, every object in a Bresson film takes on a distinct acoustic flavor: the scrape of the bedstead in Fontaine's cell (**Video 19.5**), the clank of the knights' armor in *Lancelot du Lac*, the rusty bray of the donkey Balthasar. Offscreen sound will establish a locale or will provide a motif that recalls other scenes. Bresson's intense concentration on physical details and isolated sounds often fills in for psychological analysis. The mystery and ambiguity of Bresson's style



Four Nights of a Dreamer

19.37, 19.38 Oblique eyeline matches in *Four Nights of a Dreamer*: "To set up a film is to bind persons to each other and to objects by looks."

Mouchette

19.39–19.42 Tight framings for *Mouchette.*

19.39 Most directors would have shown Mouchette going to school by establishing the locale with a long shot and then cutting in to a direct view of her walking along the street and joining her schoolmates. Instead, Bresson starts with a downward angle on the children's feet ...

19.40 ... lets Mouchette come in, her back to us ...

19.41 ... tracks a short way to follow her ...

19.42 ... and then stops before the school gate. The effect is to cut characters free of locale for a brief moment, suspending our knowledge of where they are in order to concentrate on their physical behavior.

proved suited to his treatment of solitary individuals who struggle to survive a spiritual or physical ordeal.

These enigmatic gestures, textures, and details are presented in a highly sensuous way. Bresson's images may be severe, but they are never drab. In *Les Anges du péché*, the nuns' habits create an angular geometry and lustrous range of tonalities (see 13.44). His color films achieve vivid effects by minute means: a knight's armor stands out slightly by its sheen; a mail basket in a prison office becomes a vibrant blue (**Color Plates 19.7**, **19.8**).

Bresson moved toward abbreviated, elliptical storytelling. From *Pickpocket* on, and especially in *Au Hasard Balthasar*, so much is left to the spectator's imagination that the very story events—"what happens"—become almost opaque. ("I never explain anything, as it is done in the theatre."[11]) What gives the Bresson film a sense of ongoing structure are the subtly varied, almost ceremonial repetitions—daily routines, replayed confrontations, returns to the same locales. The spectator suspects, as the individuals involved do not, that the apparently random action is part of a vast cycle of events governed by God, fate, or some other force.

Bresson never achieved the commercial success enjoyed by Antonioni, Bergman, and Fellini. Yet he influenced filmmakers as varied as Jean-Marie Straub (who saw political implications in ascetic images and direct sound) and Paul Schrader (whose *American Gigolo* reworks *Pickpocket*). Although Bresson never made his long-cherished version of the biblical book of Genesis, he remains one of the most distinctive auteurs of the postwar era.

JACQUES TATI (1908–1982)

With true auteurist fervor, Truffaut once declared that "a film by Bresson or Tati is necessarily a work of genius *a priori*, simply because a single, absolute authority has been imposed from the opening to 'The End.'"[12] The similarities between the two directors are enlightening. Both made tentative starts on their film careers during the 1930s, worked on films during the war, and became prominent in the early 1950s. Both spent years on each film; Tati's output, with only six features between 1949 and 1973, was even slimmer than Bresson's. Both directors experimented with fragmented, elliptical narratives and unusual uses of sound.

Unlike Bresson, however, Tati made some very popular films. Because he was a performer as well as a director, he also became an international celebrity. From this perspective, Tati resembled Buñuel in pushing modernist tendencies toward accessible, mainstream tradition. At one level, Tati's films are satiric commentaries on the rituals of modern life—vacations, work, housing, travel. Declaring himself an anarchist, he believed in freedom, eccentricity, and playfulness. His films lack strong plots: things simply happen, one after the other, and nothing much is ever at stake. The film accumulates tiny, even trivial events—like the microactions of Italian Neorealism (see *Umberto D*: The Maid Wakes Up p. 320), only treated as gags.

Jour de fête ("Holiday," 1949) set the pattern for most of Tati's subsequent works. A small carnival comes to a village, the townsfolk enjoy a day off, and the carnival leaves the next day. In the midst of the celebration, the local postman, François, played by Tati, continues to deliver the mail and decides to adopt American methods of efficiency. The circumscribed time and place, the contrast between humdrum routine and bursts of zany amusement, the bumbling character who disrupts everyone else's life, and the recognition that only children and eccentrics know the secret of fun—all these elements would reappear throughout Tati's later work. The loose plot, built out of elaborately staged gags and motifs rather than a strong cause-and-effect chain, would become a Tati trademark.

Jour de fête also inaugurated Tati's characteristic style. The comedy is not verbal (very little is said, and that often in a mutter or mumble) but visual and acoustic. A stiff-legged beanpole capable of outrageously mechanical gestures, Tati was one of the cinema's great clowns. Like Keaton, he was also one of its most innovative directors, relying on long shots that spread elements across the frame or in depth. Changes in sound source or level shift our attention from one aspect of the shot to another (**19.43–19.45**).

An even bigger success was *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (*Les Vacances de M. Hulot*, 1953). The scene is a seaside resort that various middle-class city people visit; the action consumes the one week of their stay. The disruptive force is Mr. Hulot, who insists on making the most of his vacation. He shatters the routine meals, arranged outings, tennis matches, and quiet card games. Tati's performance captivated audiences around the world and was credited with reviving the pantomime tradition of Chaplin and Keaton. Again, sound guides our eye and characterizes people and objects, from the percussive chugging of Hulot's car to the musical thunk of the hotel restaurant's door. Just as important, Tati created a film with a firm structure that owes little to traditional plotting. By alternating strong visual gags with empty moments that invite the spectator to see ordinary life as comic, *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* points forward to the more extreme experiments of *Play Time* (**19.46**; **Video 19.6**).

Back in Paris, Hulot launches a hilarious attack on modern work and leisure on *Mon Oncle* (*My Uncle*, 1958).

19.43–19.45 *Jour de fête*: the camera arcs around the farmer to keep François in the background as a persistent bee plagues each one.

The windows of a modernistic house seem to spy on passersby; plastic tubing extruded from a factory becomes a giant serpent. Again, Tati's long shots show individuals at the mercy of the environment they have created (**19.47**). The result is a comic version of Antonioni's portrayal of urban alienation.

The international success of *Mon Oncle*, which won the Academy Award for best foreign film, encouraged Tati to undertake his most ambitious project. On the outskirts of Paris, he built a false city, complete with paved roads, water and electricity, and traffic (**19.48**). He shot the film in 70 mm, with five-track stereophonic sound.

The result was *Play Time* (1967), one of the most audacious films of the postwar era. Aware that audiences would watch for Hulot, Tati played down his presence. Knowing that viewers rely on close-ups and centered framings to guide their attention, Tati built the film almost completely out of long shots and scattered his gags to all corners of the frame (**19.49**). Sometimes, as in the lengthy sequence of the disintegration of the Royal Garden restaurant, he packs simultaneous gags into the frame, challenging the spectator to spot them all (**19.50**). Tati's satire of tourism and urban routine encourages us to see all of life as play time.

Because Tati initially insisted that *Play Time* be shown in 70 mm, it did not get wide distribution and quickly failed. Tati went into bankruptcy, and his career never recovered. To the end of his life, he hoped to establish one theater somewhere in the world that would show *Play Time* every day, forever.

He made two more films. In *Traffic* (1971), Hulot helps a young woman deliver a recreational vehicle to an Amsterdam auto show. Simpler than *Play Time* or *Mr. Hulot's Holiday*, *Traffic* satirizes car culture. *Parade* (1973), shot for Swedish television, is a pseudo-documentary celebration of the circus and its audience. As usual, Tati blurs the boundary between performance and the comedy of everyday life (**Color Plate 19.9**).

19.46 A non-gag in *Mr. Hulot's Holiday*: the painter suspects Hulot of accidentally releasing his boat into the sea; both stand awkwardly for several moments.

19.47 Two women greet one another in *Mon Oncle*: the winding pathway keeps them from walking straight toward each other. (Note the fish fountain, turned on only when a guest arrives.)

Play Time

19.48 A production still showing a portion of Tativille built for *Play Time*.

Play Time

19.49 *Play Time*: the principal joke is in the center of the frame, where M. Giffard has collided with the glass door. On the far right, the businessman is frozen mannequinlike in midstride; he will start to walk only at the end of the shot.

Play Time

19.50 *Play Time*: while the millionaire orders his meal from the splotches on the waiter's jacket, the restaurant owner (foreground left) prepares to calm his nerves with an antacid. This sets up a later joke, when Hulot accidentally drinks the fizzy potion, thinking it is champagne.

Before his death, Tati was planning another Hulot film, *Confusion*, in which his hero would work in television and be killed on camera. But the debts of *Play Time* haunted him, and in 1974 his films were auctioned off at an absurdly low price. Over the following decades, however, rereleases of all his films demonstrated to new audiences that Tati had left behind a rich body of work that invites the spectator to see ordinary life as an off-center comedy.

SATYAJIT RAY (1921–1992)

Throughout the postwar era, Western film culture took the Bengali director Satyajit Ray as the preeminent Indian filmmaker. He made almost thirty feature films and triumphed in other media as well. As a commercial graphic artist, he revolutionized Indian book design. He wrote children's books, science-fiction novels, and detective stories. He also became an acclaimed musician, scoring his own films and those of other filmmakers.

Most of Ray's film work runs counter to the commercial Indian cinema. His artistic roots lie in the Bengali renaissance of the nineteenth century, associated with the Tagore family. The most famous Tagore, the poet Rabindranath, turned the young Ray toward the liberal humanism that became the hallmark of his work. In addition, Ray's own family boasted distinguished inventors, teachers, writers, and musicians. He brought the westernized humanistic culture of his youth to all his activities.

In 1947, Ray founded the Calcutta Film Society, which brought European and American films to India. His cinematic influences crystallized in the late 1940s: the films of John Ford, William Wyler, and Jean Renoir, whom he met during the filming of *The River* (see The Return of Older Directors p. 332), as well as the body of Italian Neorealist cinema, especially *Bicycle Thieves*. He criticized the contemporary Indian cinema for its exaggerated spectacle and inattention to reality. To Ray, the central purpose of filmmaking is "the revelation of the truth of human behavior."[13] His films' refusal to single out villains links him to Renoir, and his reluctance to endorse collective political solutions testifies to an individualistic approach to life.

Pather Panchali (1955), which took two years to make, was a turning point in postwar Indian film. A sober adaptation of a literary classic, it was shot extensively on location and used restrained acting. The film tells the story of a boy, Apu, and his life in a rural area (**Video 19.7**). The movie culminates in the death of his aunt and his sister. Ray continued Apu's story with *Aparajito* ("The Undefeated," 1956), which depicts his teenage years and the death of his parents. The trilogy concludes with *The World of Apu* (1960), in which Apu marries, confronts the death of his wife in childbirth, and comes to accept his son.

The trilogy's leisurely, "undramatic" action is based more on chronology than causality. Ray avoids dwelling on sentimental moments. In *Aparajito*, for instance, Apu hurries home to his dying mother. In most 1950s Indian cinema, this would provide the occasion for a touching deathbed scene, but here he simply arrives too late. In *The World of Apu*, the death of Apu's wife is kept offscreen. Ray's subdued approach to dramatic moments adhered to Western standards of subtle, realistic filmmaking. "At last," declared Vittorio De Sica's scriptwriter Cesare Zavattini, "the neorealist cinema that the Italians did not know how to do."[14]

Ray's earliest period, running from *Pather Panchali* to *Charulata* (1964), centers on rudimentary human problems. In the Apu trilogy, the problems are those of growing up and accepting responsibility in a world of frustration and death. In his works on the landowning aristocracy (most notably *The Music Room*, 1958), he portrays individuals who cling unreasonably to dying traditions. His "awakening woman" trilogy (most famously *Mahanagar*, or "The Big City," 1963, and *Charulata*) present women confined by Indian tradition and struggling to create their own identities. Whether the setting is a rural area or a city, Ray concentrates on family, courtship, and daily work.

Ray's films slowly accumulate moments that reveal characters' feelings. In *Pather Panchali*, Apu and his sister Durga are caught in a monsoon. He takes shelter under a tree, but she spins excitedly, washing herself in the pounding rain (**19.51**). Most Indian films would have made this the excuse for a song sequence, but here, without dialogue, Ray conveys both Durga's childish exuberance and her awakening sensuality. The moment has a dramatic consequence too: Durga will die from the cold she catches. Similarly, in the episode film *Three Daughters* (1961), tradition would have dictated an elaborate number when the little girl Ratan sings to her employer, the haughty young postmaster assigned to her remote village. Instead, Ray stages the scene with subdued simplicity. The postmaster has just finished reading a letter from his sister, and, as Ratan starts to sing, the camera tracks slowly in on him (**19.52**). Ray quietly suggests that through Ratan's song, the young man recalls his sister.

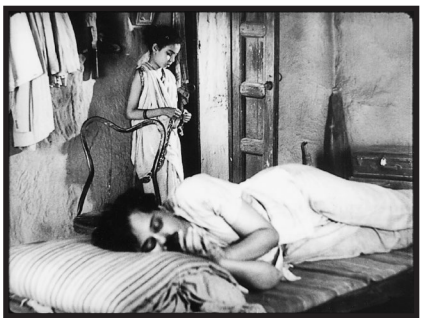
Ray's characters are judged by their eagerness to learn and their sensitivity to their surroundings. Apu observes the life around him before plunging into reading and, eventually, writing. At the beginning of *Charulata*, the wife, virtually imprisoned in the household, rushes from window to window, watching the world through binoculars.

Despite their quiet pace and realism, the films of this first period reveal a craftsman's approach. Ray gained a sense of firm structure from his study of Western cinema and of Western music, with its dramatic sonata form so different from the open forms of Indian ragas. Ray also developed his style along European and Hollywood lines. Often his shot compositions draw parallels between situations in a before-and-after fashion (**19.53**, **19.54**).

The entire Apu trilogy is bound together by motifs of setting and camera placement. The most prevalent motif in the films is the train: glimpsed by the children in *Pather Panchali*, running in the background as the mother weakens in *Aparajito*, chugging through the neighborhood of Apu's apartment in *The World of Apu.* Sometimes the train symbolizes the great world that Apu craves to explore. When he wins a globe as a school prize, he thrusts it at his mother, loftily demanding, "Do you know what this is?"; offscreen the distant train is heard (**19.55**). At other times, the train is an impersonal force shuttling the family from the countryside to Benares, from a village to Calcutta. By the end, when Apu has reconciled with his son, the train is no more than a toy that can be left behind.

Ray's international preeminence doubtless distorted Western conceptions of Indian filmmaking. Still, he was not completely cut off from the popular tradition. His films were often successful with Bengali audiences. He made several popular comedies and children's films, and he even attempted a historical epic in Hindi (*The Chess Players*, 1977). His early works also had considerable influence on Indian cinema, turning filmmakers toward location shooting and a more understated acting style.

Pather Panchali



Three Daughters

19.51, *left* Durga dances in the rain in *Pather Panchali*.

19.52, *right* The beginning of the girl's song in *Three Daughters*.

Three Daughters

19.53, *left* *Three Daughters*: as Amulya walks home through the mud, the tomboy Puglee mocks him from behind a tree.

19.54, *right* Much later, Amulya marries Puglee, somewhat against her will. Unhappy, Puglee flees him, and when he goes out searching for her, Ray repeats the earlier camera setup, emphasizing Amulya's realization of his loss.

Aparajito

19.55 Apu offers his mother the globe (*Aparajito*).

After the political upheavals of the late 1960s, Ray's work began to confront social issues more directly. A trilogy of "city films" portrays weak men trying to survive in a corrupt business world. In *The Middleman* (1975), for instance, Somnath is expected to provide a client with a woman. He is shocked when he learns that she is a friend's sister. Ray's conception of the cost of success is conveyed by cutting from Somnath's playing the pimp to a shot of his father at home, listening to a Tagore song on the radio: "Darkness is gathering over the forest."

Ray became more deliberately "modern." He adapted contemporary fiction by young writers and utilized flashbacks, negative footage, and freeze-frames. Yet he was uncomfortable with self-conscious technique: "As if being modern for a film-maker consisted solely in how he juggles with his visuals and not in his attitude to life that he expressed through the film."[15]

Many of the films of this period suggest that Ray's humanism could not comprehend the political uncertainties of modern India. His cinema had been identified with the liberal politics of Prime Minister Nehru, and as Nehru's legacy faded, so did Ray's belief in India's moral progress. His optimism is more evident in the fantasy films he made for children, such as the lively *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (1969).

At the end of his career, Ray seems to have synthesized individual concerns with contemporary political problems. *The Home and the World* (1984), a Tagore adaptation, presents the 1907 anticolonialist struggle by centering on a wife who breaks with her reclusive domestic life. *Public Enemy* (1989) is an updating of Henrik Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* and depicts the youth of a community rallying to the defense of a doctor who finds cholera-infested water in a temple. The film was relevant to an India still suffering from a disaster at the Bhopal chemical plant. Ray's 1980s work persists in asserting that any significant action, political or personal, can spring only from the conscience of the sensitive individual.

REFERENCES

1. Alexandre Astruc, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: *La Caméra-Stylo*," in Peter Graham, ed., *The New Wave* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 23.
2. Federico Fellini, *Comments on Film*, ed. Giovanni Grazzini and trans. Joseph Henry (Fresno, CA: California State University Press, 1988), p. 64.
3. Luis Buñuel, *My Last Sigh*, trans. Abigail Israel (New York: Knopf, 1983), p. 92.
4. Quoted in Lise-Lone Marker and Frederick J. Marker, *Ingmar Bergman: Four Decades in the Theatre* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 6.
5. André Bazin, *What Is Cinema? II*, trans. and ed. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), p. 89.
6. Fellini, *Comments on Film*, p. 77.
7. Quoted in Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present* (New York: Ungar, 1983), p. 230.
8. Quoted in Andrew Sarris, ed., *Interviews with Film Directors* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), p. 9.
9. See Robert Bresson, *Notes on Cinematography*, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York: Urizen, 1977).
10. Quoted in "The Question," *Cahiers du Cinéma in English* 8 (February 1967): 8.
11. Quoted in Sarris, *Interviews with Film Directors*, p. 26.
12. François Truffaut, *The Films of My Life*, trans. Leonard Mayhew (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), p. 235.
13. Quoted in Chidananda Das Gupta, ed., *Satyajit Ray: An Anthology of Statements on Ray and by Ray* (New Delhi: Directorate of Film Festivals, 1981), p. 136.
14. Ibid., p. 61.
15. Quoted in Marie Seton, *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 283.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On Bergman and Antonioni: "Bergman, Antonioni, and the stubborn stylists"
On Antonioni's *L'Avventura*: "Going inside by staying outside: L'AVVENTURA on the Criterion Channel"
On Kurosawa's early films: "Kurosawa's early spring"
On Tati's production designer: "La main droite de M. Hulot"

The 400 Blows

CHAPTER 20

NEW WAVES AND YOUNG CINEMAS, 1958–1967

Before the Revolution

Teenagers and twenty somethings in the 1950s enjoyed more advantages than in earlier eras. Throughout Europe, Asia, the Communist bloc, and the more developed areas of South America, many young people benefited from a new prosperity. Before 1945, most students had ended their education after primary school, but after the war many national governments mandated high-school graduation. That swelled the ranks of college students, who had good job opportunities in the "long boom" of the postwar years.

Those who came of age in the 1950s and early 1960s developed a distinctive culture built around pop music, fashion, radio shows, magazines, and cars and motorbikes. In their appetite for something unusual, members of this generation were ready for a cinema quite different from what the Germans called *Papas Kino*. Recognizing this new audience, several national film industries encouraged new talent. The directors who emerged, some older and some quite young, became powerful voices in world cinema. The "new cinemas" of the period, working in parallel with the auteurs we considered in Chapter 19, rejuvenated cinema's modernist tradition, and many members of these groups aged gracefully, remaining major figures well into the 2000s.

THE INDUSTRIES' NEW NEEDS

Industrial conditions favored the arrival of fresh talent. American film attendance had declined after 1947, but elsewhere audiences did not significantly dwindle until the late 1950s. Then, with television providing cheap entertainment, producers aimed to expand audiences—sometimes through coproductions, sometimes by making erotic films. They also tried to appeal to the "youth culture" emerging in most Western countries in the late 1950s.

In Western Europe, sexual liberation, rock music, new fashions, the growth of soccer and other sports, and new forms of tourism such as Club Med became hallmarks of the generation coming to maturity around 1960. Trends toward an urban, leisure-class lifestyle were strengthened by an economic boom after 1958 that raised European living standards. Similar patterns emerged in Japan and Eastern Europe.

Who could better attract this affluent audience than young filmmakers? Film companies began to open up production to beginning directors. At the same time, professional film training was spreading. After the late 1950s, existing film academies in the USSR, Eastern Europe, France, and Italy were joined by national film schools founded in the Netherlands, Sweden, West Germany, and Denmark. Throughout Europe, young directors made their first features in the years 1958 to 1967. Brazil, one of the most economically developed countries in South America, also reflected this trend in its Cinema Nôvo group.

Youth culture accelerated the internationalizing of film culture. Art theaters and ciné-clubs multiplied. The list of international film festivals now included San Francisco and London (both begun in 1957), Moscow (1959), Adelaide and New York (1963), Chicago and Panama (1965), Brisbane (1966), and San Antonio and Shiraz, Iran (1967). Festivals in Hyères, France, and Pesaro, Italy (both begun in 1965) were deliberately created as gathering points for young filmmakers.

FORMAL AND STYLISTIC TRENDS

Each nation's new cinema was a loose assortment of quite different filmmakers. Typically, their work does not display the degree of unity that we find in the stylistic movements of the silent era. Still, some broad trends link the young cinemas.

The new generation was the first to have a clear awareness of the history of cinema. The Cinémathèque Française in Paris, the National Film Theatre in London, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York became shrines for young audiences eager to discover films from around the world. Film schools screened foreign classics for study. Older directors were venerated as spiritual "fathers": Jean Renoir for François Truffaut; Fritz Lang for Alexander Kluge; Alexander Dovzhenko for Andrei Tarkovsky. In particular, young directors absorbed the neorealist aesthetic and the art cinema of the 1950s (Chapters 16–19). Thus the new cinemas extended several postwar trends.

Most apparent were innovations in technique. In part, Young Cinema identified itself with a more immediate approach to filming. During the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, manufacturers perfected cameras that did not require tripods, reflex viewfinders that showed exactly what the lens saw, and film stocks that needed less light to create acceptable exposures. Although much of this equipment was designed to aid documentary filmmakers (see New Technology for the New Documentary p. 427), fiction filmmakers immediately took advantage of it. Now a director could shoot with direct sound, recording the ambient noise of the world outside the sealed studio. Now the camera could take to the streets, searching out fictional characters in the midst of a crowd (**20.1**, **20.2**). This portable equipment also let the filmmaker work quickly and cheaply, an advantage for producers anxious to economize in a declining industry.

The 1960s fictional cinema gained a looseness that put it closer to Direct Cinema documentary (see Chapter 21). Directors often filmed from a distance, using panning shots to cover the action and zoom lenses to enlarge details, as if the filmmaker were a journalist snooping on the characters (**20.3**). During this period, close-ups and shot/reverse-shot exchanges began to be shot almost entirely with long lenses—a trend that would dominate the 1970s and after (**20.4**, **20.5**).

The Age of Daydreaming

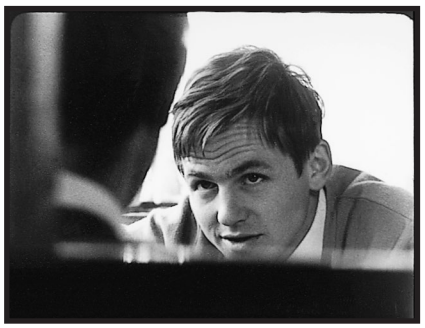
20.1 István Szabó's *The Age of Daydreaming* (1964): shooting on the street, using a long lens that flattens perspective.

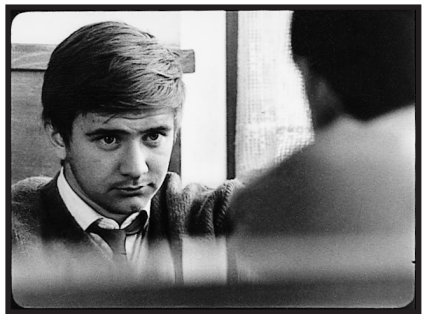
Walkover

20.2 Shallow depth in a closer view, yielded by the telephoto lens (*Walkover*, 1965, Jerzy Skolimowski).

Es

20.3 A moment in the pan-and-zoom shot covering a conversation (*Es*, 1965, Ulrich Schamoni).



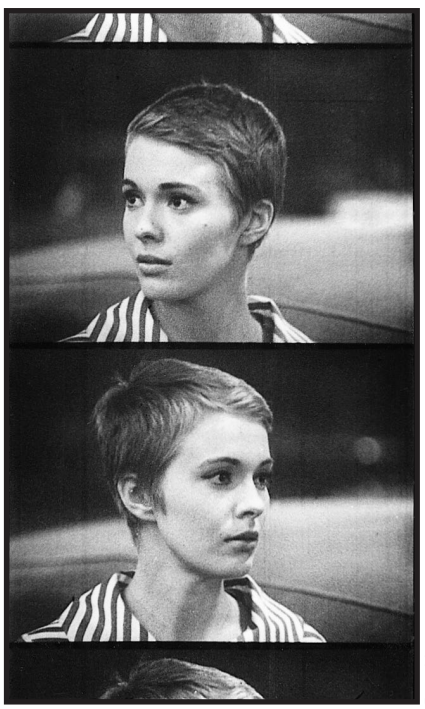


Black Peter

20.4, 20.5 Shot/reverse shot employing a long lens in Miloš Forman's *Black Peter* (1963).

Los Golfos

20.7 The end point of a zoom-in from *Los Golfos*.



Breathless

20.6 In *Breathless*, Godard's jump cuts create a skittery, nervous style.

Yet this rough documentary look did not commit the directors to recording the world passively. To an extent not seen since the silent era, young filmmakers tapped the power of fragmentary, discontinuous editing. In *Breathless* (France, 1960), Jean-Luc Godard violated basic rules of continuity editing, notably by tossing out frames from the middle of shots in order to create jarring *jump cuts* (**20.6**). A film by the Japanese Nagisa Oshima might contain more than a thousand shots. Older directors favored smooth editing, considering Soviet Montage unrealistic and manipulative, but now montage became a source of inspiration. At the limit, 1960s directors pushed toward a *collage* form. Here the director builds the film out of staged footage, "found" footage (newsreels and old movies), and images of all sorts (advertisements, snapshots, posters, and so on).

Yet young filmmakers also extended the use of long takes, one of the major stylistic trends of the postwar era (see Stylistic Changes p. 299). A scene might be handled in a single shot, a device that quickly became known by its French name, the *plan-séquence* ("sequence shot"). The lightweight cameras proved ideal for making long takes. Some directors, such as the Hungarian Miklós Jancsó, developed the Ophüls-Antonioni tradition by building the film out of lengthy, intricate traveling shots. Other directors alternated lengthy shots and abrupt editing; French New Wave directors were fond of chopping off a graceful long take with sudden close-ups. Across the 1960s, telephoto filming, discontinuous editing, and complex camera movements all came to replace the dense staging in depth that had been common after World War II (see Stylistic Changes p. 300).

The Italian Neorealists had shown filmmakers the power of nonprofessional actors, actual locations, and improvised performances. The new techniques of Direct Cinema allowed young directors to go even further on this path. Accordingly, young filmmakers set their stories in their own apartments and neighborhoods, filming them in a way that traditional directors considered rough and unprofessional. For instance, in *Los Golfos* ("The Drifters," 1960), Carlos Saura uses nonactors and improvisation to tell his story of young men's lives of petty crime. Saura incorporates handheld shots and abrupt zooms (**20.7**) to give the film a documentary immediacy.

Young filmmakers embraced other dimensions of art-cinema realism as well, including the chance events that do not fit a linear cause-and-effect story line. At the same time, filmmakers developed the subjective side of art-cinema conventions. Flashbacks had become common in the postwar decade, but now filmmakers used them to intensify the sense of characters' mental states. Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) led many filmmakers to "subjectivize" flashbacks. Scenes of fantasy and dreams proliferated. All this mental imagery became far

Daisies

Everything for Sale

20.8, *left* *Daisies*: the long lens flattens women and man.

20.9, *right* *Everything for Sale* joins the new cinemas in its self-conscious references to film history—a history that includes Wajda's early work. In a direct echo of *Ashes and Diamonds*, the mysterious young actor lights drinks while remarking that the partisans were symbols for his generation.

more fragmentary and disordered than it had been in earlier cinema. The filmmaker might interrupt the narrative with glimpses of another realm that only gradually becomes identifiable as memory, dream, or fantasy. At the limit, this realm might remain tantalizingly obscure to the very end of the film, suggesting how reality and imagination can fuse in human experience.

The art-cinema tendency toward authorial commentary likewise continued. François Truffaut's lilting camera movements around his characters suggested that their lives were a lyrical dance. In *Daisies* (1966), Vera Chytilová uses camera tricks to comment on her heroines' mocking view of men (**20.8**).

Directors combined objective realism, subjective realism, and authorial commentary in ways that generated narrative ambiguity. Now the spectator could not always tell which of these three factors was the basis for the film's presentation of events. In Jaromil Jirěs's *The Cry* (1963), events may be taken as either objective or subjective, and the question is left open as to whose subjective point of view might be represented. Open-ended narratives also lent themselves to ambiguity, as when we are left to wonder at the end of *Breathless* about the heroine's attitude toward the hero.

As films' stories became indeterminate, they seemed to back away from documenting the social world. Now the film itself came to seem the only "reality" the director could claim. Combined with young directors' awareness of the history of their medium, this retreat from objective realism made film form and style self-referential. Many films no longer sought to reflect a reality outside themselves. Like modern painting and literature, film became *reflexive*, pointing to its own materials, structures, and history.

Reflexivity was perhaps least disturbing when the film built its plot around the making of a film, as in *8½*, Godard's *Contempt* (1963), and Andrzej Wajda's *Everything for Sale* (1968), a memorial to Zbigniew Cybulski, the deceased star of *Ashes and Diamonds* (**20.9**). Even when filmmaking is not an overt subject, reflexivity remains a key trait of new cinemas and of 1960s art cinema generally. Erik Løken's *The Hunt* (1959) starts with a voice-over commentary remarking, "Let's begin," and ends with the narrator asserting, "We can't let it end like this." In *Breathless*, the hero talks to the audience, and Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960; **20.10**) affectionately echoes silent cinema.

Shoot the Piano Player

20.10 Irises in *Shoot the Piano Player* pay homage to silent film.

Le Chat dans le sac

20.11, 20.12 *Le Chat dans le sac* cites Godard's *Vivre sa vie*.

The collage films, which juxtapose footage from different sources or periods, contribute to a similar awareness of the artifice of film. And new cinemas could even cite each other, as when Gilles Groulx's *Le Chat dans le sac* ("The Cat in the Bag," 1964) deliberately echoes a French New Wave film (**20.11**, **20.12**). In all, the films acknowledge the mechanisms of illusion-making and an indebtedness to the history of the medium. This made the new cinemas major contributors to postwar cinematic modernism.

Many countries sustained new waves and new cinemas, but this chapter concentrates on the most influential and original developments in Western and Eastern Europe, Great Britain, the USSR, Japan, and Brazil.

FRANCE: NEW WAVE AND NEW CINEMA

In France during the late 1950s, the idealism and political movements of the immediate postwar years gave way to a more apolitical culture of consumption and leisure. The rising generation was dubbed the *Nouvelle Vague* (the "New Wave") that would soon govern France. Many of these young people read film journals and attended screenings at ciné-clubs and *art et essai* ("art and experiment") cinemas. They were ready for more offbeat films than those of the Cinema of Quality.

In 1958, film attendance started to decline sharply, and several big-budget films failed. At the same time, government aid fostered risk-taking. In 1953, the Centre National du Cinéma had established the *prime de la qualité* ("subsidy for quality"), which allowed new directors to make short films. A 1959 law created the *avance sur recettes* ("advance on receipts") system, which financed first features on the basis of a script. Between 1958 and 1961, dozens of directors made their first full-length films.

Such a broad development naturally hosted quite different trends, but two major ones are crucial. One centers on the Nouvelle Vague, or New Wave, group. The other trend, often identified with the Left Bank group, involves a slightly older generation who now moved into feature production.

The New Wave

The French New Wave (Nouvelle Vague) is largely responsible for the romantic image of the young director fighting to make personal films that defy the conventional industry. Ironically, most directors associated with the New Wave quickly became mainstream, even ordinary, filmmakers. But a few not only popularized a new conception of personal cinema but also carried forward innovations in film form and style.

The principal Nouvelle Vague directors had been film critics for the magazine *Cahiers du cinéma* (see The Rise and Spread of the Auteur Theory p. 365). Strong adherents of the auteur policy, these men believed that the director should express a personal vision of the world. This vision would appear not only in the film's script but also in its style. Most of the *Cahiers* group started by directing short films but, by the end of the decade, most turned to features. They helped finance each other's projects and shared the services of two outstanding cinematographers: Henri Decaë and Raoul Coutard.

The New Wave's initial impact came from four films released in 1959 and 1960. Claude Chabrol's *Le Beau Serge* and *Les Cousins* (both 1959) explored the disparity between rural and urban life in the new France. The first film almost became the French entry at the Cannes Film Festival; the second won a major prize at the Berlin festival. François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959), a sensitive tale of a boy becoming a thief and a runaway, won the director's prize at the Cannes Film Festival, giving the New Wave great international prestige. The most innovative early New Wave film, Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960), was a portrait of a petty criminal's last days. As Chabrol, Truffaut, and Godard followed up their debuts, other young directors launched first features.

Many New Wave films satisfied producers' financial demands. Shot on location with portable equipment, little-known actors, and small crews, these films could be made quickly and for less than half the usual cost. Typically, a film was shot silent and postdubbed. For three years, several New Wave films made high profits and brought fame to Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean-Claude Brialy, Anna Karina, Jeanne Moreau, and other stars who would dominate the French cinema for decades. New Wave films also proved more exportable than many bigger productions.

As the very name *New Wave* indicates, much of the group's success stems from the filmmakers' rapport with their youthful audience. Most of the directors were born around 1930 and were based in Paris. By concentrating on urban professional life with its chic fashions and sports cars, all-night parties, and bars and jazz clubs, their films suggested that the café scene was being captured with the immediacy of Direct Cinema. The films also share thematic affinities. Authority is to be distrusted; political and romantic commitment is suspect. The characters' gratuitous actions bear traces of pop existentialism. And in an echo of Poetic Realism, the Tradition of Quality, and American crime movies, the films often center on a femme fatale.

The New Wave directors also shared some assumptions about narrative. Like Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fellini, these filmmakers often built their plots around chance events and digressive episodes. They intensified the art-cinema convention of the open-ended narrative; the famous final shot of *The 400 Blows* made the freeze-frame technique a favored device for expressing an unresolved situation (**20.13**). At the same time, the mixture of tone characteristic of Italian Neorealism was pushed to the limit. In the films of Truffaut, Godard, and Chabrol, farcical comedy is often only an instant away from anxiety, pain, and death.

Further, the Nouvelle Vague was the first group of directors to refer openly to film traditions. For these former critics, film history was a living presence. In *Breathless*, the hero imitates Humphrey Bogart, while the heroine comes from Otto Preminger's *Bonjour Tristesse* (1958). Partygoers in *Paris Belongs to Us* (1961) screen *Metropolis*, while in *The 400 Blows* the boy steals a production still from Ingmar Bergman's *Summer with Monika.* Such awareness of a film's debt to history helped usher in the reflexive filmmaking of the 1960s.

Because the *Cahiers* critics favored a cinema of personal vision, it is not surprising that the New Wave did not coalesce into a unified stylistic movement like German Expressionism or Soviet Montage. The development of the directors' careers during the 1960s suggests that the New Wave was only a brief alliance of varied temperaments. The two most exemplary and influential directors were Truffaut and Godard (see François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard box), but several of their colleagues also made long-term careers in the film industry.

"You become a director," Claude Chabrol wrote, "when you find the money to make your first film."[3] His wife's inheritance financed *Le Beau Serge*, which won a *prime de la qualité* that nearly covered its costs before its release. The success of *Les Cousins* allowed Chabrol to make several films quickly. His admiration for Hitchcock led him toward moody psychodramas, often with touches of grotesque humor (*Les Bonnes femmes*, 1960; *Ophélia*). Chabrol embarked on a series of psychological thrillers: *La Femme infidèle* ("The Unfaithful Wife," 1969), *Que la bête meure* (*This Man Must Die*, 1969), *Le Boucher* ("The Butcher," 1970), and others. Like Hitchcock, Chabrol traces how the tensions of middle-class life explode into madness and violence. By his death in 2010, Chabrol had made more than sixty features and several television episodes, remaining the most commercially flexible and pragmatic director to emerge from *Cahiers*.

The 400 Blows

20.13 Antoine Doinel, at the edge of the sea, turns to the audience in world cinema's most famous freeze-frame (*The 400 Blows*).

FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT AND JEAN-LUC GODARD

Friends, *Cahiers* critics, codirectors (on a 1958 short), and eventual adversaries, Truffaut and Godard usefully define the poles of the New Wave. One proved that the young cinema could rejuvenate mainstream filmmaking; the other proved that the new generation could attack the comfort and pleasure of ordinary cinema.

A passionate cinéphile, François Truffaut grew up as a ward of the critic André Bazin. After a notable short film, *Les Mistons* ("The Brats," 1958), Truffaut managed to finance a feature, *The 400 Blows*. This film about a young runaway established an autobiographical strain in Truffaut's work. His next features revealed two more tendencies that would recur over his career: the offhand, affectionately parodic treatment of a crime plot (*Shoot the Piano Player*, 1960) and the somber but lyrical handling of an unhappy love affair (*Jules and Jim*, 1962). For many worldwide audiences, these three films defined the New Wave.

Stylistically, Truffaut's early films flaunt zoom shots, choppy editing, casual compositions, and bursts of quirky humor or sudden violence. Sometimes such devices capture the characters' vitality, as in Antoine Doinel's frantic rush around Paris in *The 400 Blows* or in the waltzlike camera movements that surround Jules, Jim, and Catherine during their country outings. The extreme shifts of mood in *Shoot the Piano Player* are accented by abrupt cutaways; when a gangster swears, "May my mother die if I'm not telling the truth," Truffaut cuts to a shot of an old lady keeling over. But Truffaut's technique increasingly injected a subdued romanticism, as when he dwells on Charlie's numb face at the end of *Shoot the Piano Player* or turns Catherine's image into a freeze-frame **(20.14)**.

Truffaut remained true to the *Cahiers* legacy by inserting into each film references to his favorite periods of film history and his admired directors (Lubitsch, Hitchcock, Renoir). *Jules and Jim*, set in the early days of cinema, provided an occasion to incorporate silent footage and to employ old-fashioned irises. (Compare **20.10**.)

Jules and Jim

20.14 A snapshot image, thanks to the freeze-frame (*Jules and Jim*).

Truffaut sought not to destroy traditional cinema but to renew it. In the *Cahiers* spirit, he aimed to enrich commercial filmmaking by balancing personal expression with a concern for his audience: "I have to feel I am producing a piece of entertainment."[1] Over two decades, he made eighteen more films. As if seeking more direct contact with the viewer, he took up acting, performing in his own works and in Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). His output includes light entertainments (*Vivement dimanche!* ["Finally Sunday!"], 1983), bittersweet studies of youth (*Stolen Kisses*, 1968), and more meditative films (*The Wild Child*, 1970). Late in his life, he created intense studies of psychological obsession (*The Story of Adele H.*, 1975; *The Green Room*, 1978). Of Truffaut's last films, only *The Last Metro* (1980) achieved international success, but he remained the most popular New Wave director.

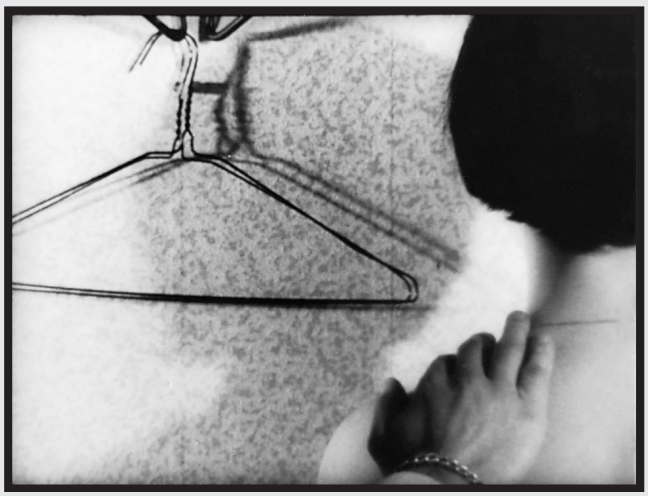
Far more abrasive was the work of Jean-Luc Godard. Like Truffaut, he was a stormy and demanding critic. He soon became the most provocative New Wave filmmaker. Of his early works, only *Breathless* had notable financial success—in part because of Belmondo's insolent performance. The film was also recognizably New Wave in its handheld camerawork, jerky editing, and homages to Jean-Pierre Melville and Monogram B pictures. Over the next decade, Godard made at least two features per year, and it became clear that he, more than any other *Cahiers* director, was redefining film structure and style.

Godard's work poses fundamental questions about narrative. While his first films, such as *Breathless* and *A Woman Is a Woman* (1961), have fairly straightforward plots, he gradually moved toward a more fragmentary, collage structure in *A Married Woman* (1964) and *La Chinoise* (1967). A story is still apparent, but it is deflected into unpredictable paths. Godard juxtaposes staged scenes with documentary material (advertisements, comic strips, crowds passing in the street), often with little connection to the narrative. Far more than his New Wave contemporaries, Godard mixes conventions drawn from popular culture, such as detective novels or Hollywood movies, with references to philosophy or avant-garde art. (Many of his stylistic asides are reminiscent of Lettrist and Situationist works; see The Experimental Compilation Film p. 441.) The inconsistencies, digressions, and disunities of Godard's work make most New Wave films seem quite traditional by comparison.

Breathless identified Godard with the handheld camera and the jump cut (see **20.6; Video 20.1**). His subsequent films explore film style more widely, interrogating conventional film techniques. Compositions are

(continued)

FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT AND JEAN-LUC GODARD, continued



Vivre sa vie

20.15 The painterly flatness of the Godard frame (*Vivre sa vie*, 1962).

decentered; the camera moves on its own to explore a milieu. One of Godard's most influential innovations was to design shots that seem astonishingly flat (**20.15**).

Nothing could be further from Truffaut's accommodating attitude to his audience than Godard's assault on sense and the senses. In Truffaut's *La Nuit américaine* (*Day for Night*, 1973), filmmaking becomes a merry party, after which everyone can be forgiven. Godard's *Contempt* (1963), by contrast, treats filmmaking as an exercise in sadomasochism. To secure his job, a scriptwriter leaves his wife alone with a venal producer and then taunts her with his suspicions of infidelity. His games and her contempt for him lead to her death. Fritz Lang, playing himself as the director, is seen to be a slave in exile. Ironically, Godard's critique of the film world uses the resources of the big-budget film to create ravishing color compositions (**Color Plate 20.1**).

Such works aroused passionate debate. After the mid-1960s, Godard continued to change in ways that aroused attention. Even his detractors grant that he is the most widely imitated director of the French New Wave, perhaps the most influential director of the entire postwar era. With characteristic generosity Truffaut remarked, "There is the cinema *before* Godard and the cinema *after* Godard."[2]

Although Eric Rohmer was nearly ten years older than most of his *Cahiers* friends, his renown came somewhat later. A reflective aesthete, Rohmer adhered closely to André Bazin's teachings. *Le Signe du lion* (1962) is akin to *Bicycle Thieves*, consisting largely of a homeless man's meanderings through the hot Parisian summer (**20.16**).

Later, Rohmer embarked on his "Six Moral Tales," wry studies of men and women struggling to balance intelligence with emotional and erotic impulses. In the first feature-length tale, *La Collectionneuse* (1966), the nymphlike Haydée tempts the overintellectual Adrien but remains just out of his reach (**20.17**). After the success of this film, Rohmer was able to complete his first series with *My Night at Maud's* (1967), *Claire's Knee* (1970), and

Le Signe du lion

20.16 Parisian landscapes and a weary man's gait in *Le Signe du lion*.

La Collectionneuse

20.17 Flirtation among the intelligentsia: Rohmer's characteristic world already formulated in *La Collectionneuse*.

Paris Belongs to Us

20.18 A theater rehearsal with sinister overtones (*Paris Belongs to Us*).

Zazie dans le Métro

20.19 Joviality echoing the Marx Brothers (*Zazie dans le métro*).

Love in the Afternoon (1972). In the 1980s, he completed a second series, "Comedies and Proverbs," and launched another, "Tales of Four Seasons" (1990–1998). Rohmer continued directing into his eighties, embracing 16 mm and digital video (*The Lady and the Duke*, 2001). Deflating his characters' pretensions while still sympathizing with their efforts to find happiness, Rohmer's cinema has the flavor of the novel of manners or of Renoir's films.

Whereas Rohmer favors the concise, neatly ironic tale, the films of Jacques Rivette, another *Cahiers* critic, struggle to capture the endlessness of life itself. *L'Amour fou* (1968) runs more than four hours, *Out 1* (1971) twelve. Such abnormal lengths allow Rivette gradually to unfold a daily rhythm behind which intricate, half-concealed conspiracies are felt to lurk. Many of the questions raised in *Out 1* are never answered (**Color Plate 20.2**).

Paris Belongs to Us initiated this paranoid plot structure. A young woman is told that the unseen rulers of the world have driven one man to suicide and will soon kill the man she loves. The film owes much to Lang, whose parables of fate and foreboding Rivette admired. *Paris Belongs to Us* also introduces Rivette's fascination with the theater. In one plot strand, an aspiring director tries to stage *Pericles* in makeshift circumstances (**20.18**). *L'Amour fou* develops the motif more elaborately by following a 16 mm film crew documenting a theater troupe's production. Considered marginal in the prime Nouvelle Vague period, Rivette's work strongly influenced the French cinema of the 1970s.

More stylized in technique are the films of Jacques Demy, whose career was launched with *Lola* (1961, dedicated to Max Ophüls in memory of *Lola Montès*). This and *Baie des anges* ("Bay of Angels," 1963) introduced the artificial decor and costumes that became Demy's trademark. With *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964), Demy broke even more sharply with realism by having all the dialogue sung. Michel Legrand's pop score and Demy's vibrant color schemes helped the film achieve a huge commercial success. In *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort* (1967), an homage to MGM musicals, Demy created the sense that an entire city's population was dancing to the changing moods of his protagonists (**Color Plate 20.3**). Most of Demy's films disturbingly contrast sumptuous visual design with banal, even sordid, plotlines.

The New Wave label was often applied to directors who had little in common with the *Cahiers* group. Niko Papatakis's savage *Les Abysses* (1963), for instance, seems chiefly indebted to the Theater of the Absurd in its depiction of two housemaids' frenzied psychodrama. By contrast, the mainstream Louis Malle could appropriate a New Wave style for his *Zazie dans le métro* (1960; **20.19**). In general, a great variety of young filmmakers emerged under the New Wave umbrella.

New Cinema: The Left Bank

The late 1950s brought to prominence another loosely affiliated group of filmmakers—since known as the *Rive Gauche*, or "Left Bank," group. Mostly older than the *Cahiers* crew, they tended to see cinema as akin to other arts, particularly literature. Some of these directors—Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda, and Georges Franju—were already known for their unusual short documentaries (see France: The Auteurs' Documentaries p. 423). Like New Wave filmmakers, however, they practiced cinematic modernism, and their emergence in the late 1950s benefited from the youthful public's interest in experimentation.

La Pointe Courte

20.20 In *La Pointe Courte*, the couple declaim philosophically while in the background fishermen go about their work.

Two works of the mid-1950s were significant precursors. Alexandre Astruc, whose caméra-stylo manifesto had been an important spur to the auteur theory (see The Rise and Spread of the Auteur Theory p. 365), made *Les Mauvaises rencontres* ("Bad Liaisons," 1955), which uses flashbacks and a voice-over narration to explain the past of a woman brought to a police station in connection with an abortionist. More important is Agnès Varda's short feature *La Pointe Courte* (1955). Much of the film consists of a couple's random walks. But the nonactors and real locales conflict with the couple's archly stylized voice-over dialogue (**20.20**). The film's elliptical editing was without parallel in the cinema of its day.

The prototypical Left Bank film was *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), directed by Alain Resnais from a script by Marguerite Duras. Appearing in 1959, it shared the limelight with *Les Cousins* and *The 400 Blows*, offering more evidence that the French cinema was renewing itself. But *Hiroshima* differs greatly from the works of Chabrol and Truffaut. At once highly intellectual and viscerally shocking, it juxtaposes the present and the past in disturbing ways.

A French actress comes to Hiroshima to perform in an antiwar film. She is attracted to a Japanese man. Over two nights and days they make love, talk, quarrel, and gain an obscure understanding (**Video 20.1**). At the same time, memories of the German soldier she loved during the Occupation well up unexpectedly. She struggles to connect her own torment during World War II with the suffering inflicted in the 1945 atomic destruction of Hiroshima.

Duras builds her script as a duet, with male and female voices intertwining over the images. Often the viewer does not know if the sound track carries real conversations, imaginary dialogues, or commentary spoken by the characters. The film leaps from current story action to documentary footage, usually of Hiroshima, or to shots of the actress's youth in France (**20.21**, **20.22**). While audiences had seen flashback constructions throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Resnais made such temporal switches sudden and fragmentary. In many cases, they remain ambiguously poised between memory and fantasy.

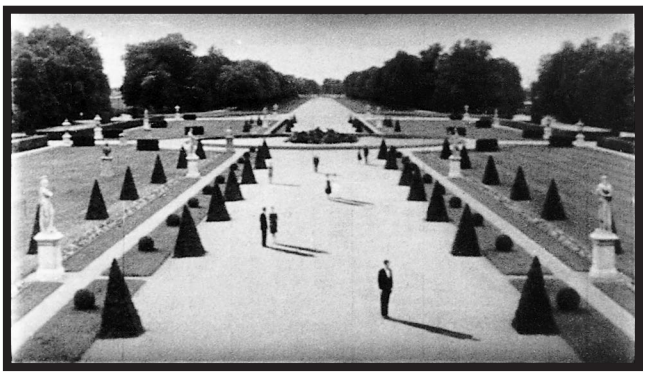
In *Hiroshima*'s second part, the Japanese man pursues the French woman through the city over a single night. Now her inner voice takes the place of flashbacks, commenting on what is happening in the present. If the film's first half is so rapidly paced as to disorient the spectator, the second part daringly slows to the tempo of their walking, her nervous avoidance, his patient waiting. The rhythm, which forces us to observe nuances of their behavior, anticipates that of Antonioni's *L'Avventura*.

Hiroshima mon amour was shown out of competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 1959 and awarded the International Critics' Prize. It caused a sensation, both for its scenes of sexual intimacy and for its storytelling techniques. Its ambiguous mixture of documentary realism, subjective evocation, and authorial commentary represented a landmark in the development of the international art cinema.

Hiroshima lifted Resnais to international renown. His next work, *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961), pushed modernist ambiguity to new extremes. This tale of three people encountering each other in a luxurious hotel mixes fantasy, dream—and reality, if there is any to be discovered (**20.23**). Resnais's next film *Muriel* (1963) uses no flashbacks, but the past remains visible in a young man's amateur movies of his traumatic tour of duty in Algeria. Even more explicitly than *Hiroshima*, the film takes up political questions; the Muriel of the title, never seen, is an Algerian tortured

Hiroshima mon amour

20.21, 20.22 *Hiroshima mon amour*: as the couple lie in bed, Resnais cuts abruptly to a shot of the woman's German lover. The grayer tonality of the film stock helps mark the distant past.



Last Year at Marienbad

20.23 *Last Year at Marienbad*: people cast shadows but trees and statues do not.

by French occupiers. Resnais emphasizes the anxiety of the present through a jolting editing far more precise than the rough jump cuts of the New Wave (**20.24**, **20.25**).

The success of *Hiroshima mon amour* helped launch features by other Left Bank filmmakers. Georges Franju's *Eyes without a Face* (1959, **20.26**) and *Judex* (1963) offered cerebral, slightly surrealist reworkings of classic genres and paid homage to directors such as Fritz Lang and Louis Feuillade. Resnais's editor Henri Colpi was able to make *Une Aussi longue absence* (1960), a tale of a café keeper who believes that a tramp is her returning husband. With its fragmentary scenes and unexpected cuts, it anticipates *Muriel*. Marguerite Duras, who wrote Colpi's film as well as Resnais's, was eventually drawn to filmmaking (see Chapter 25).

The fame of Resnais's work enabled another literary figure to move into directing. After scripting *Last Year at Marienbad*, the novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet debuted as a director with *L'Immortelle* (1962). It continues *Marienbad*'s rendition of "impossible" times and spaces (**20.27**, **20.28**). Robbe-Grillet's second film, *Trans-Europe Express* (1967), is self-consciously about storytelling, as three writers settle down in a train to write about international drug smuggling. The film shows us their plot enacted, with all the variants and revisions that emerge from the discussion.

The *Hiroshima* breakthrough also helped Agnès Varda make a full-length feature, *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962). Despite its title, the film covers ninety-five minutes in the life of an actress awaiting the results of a critical medical test. Varda distances us from this tense situation by breaking the film into thirteen "chapters" and by including various digressions (**20.29**). The film's exuberance, in surprising contrast to its grim subject, puts it close to the New Wave tone, but its experiment in manipulating story duration has an intellectual flavor typical of the Left Bank group.

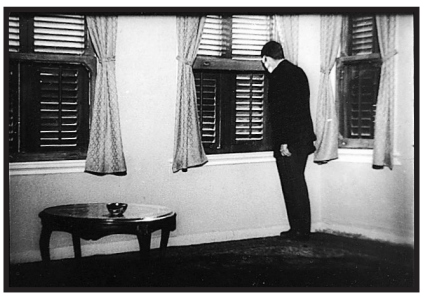
Both the New Wave and the Left Bank groups had only a few years of financial success. Film attendance continued to decline. Some works by novice directors, notably Jacques Rozier's *Adieu Philippine* (1963), ran up huge production

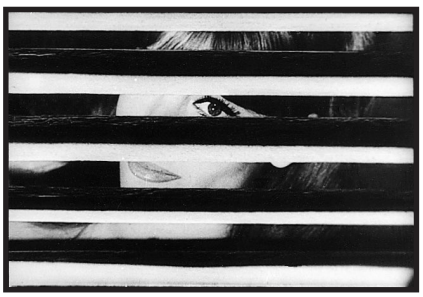
Muriel

20.24, 20.25 *Muriel*: when Alphonse rises from a table, Resnais cuts to him in a different locale but in the same part of the frame.

Eyes without a Face

20.26 A dead-white mask echoing silent-film makeup in Franju's *Eyes without a Face*.





L'Immortelle

20.27, 20.28 The protagonist of *L'Immortelle* peers out through a blind, and the phantom woman he pursues, in still photograph, peers back.

Cléo from 5 to 7

20.29 Cléo sings to the camera.

costs. By 1963, the New Cinema was no longer selling, and it was as difficult for a young director to get started as it would have been ten years earlier. Tenacious producers such as Georges de Beauregard, Anatole Dauman, Mag Bodard, and Pierre Braunberger assisted the major filmmakers, but far more bankable were directors like Claude Lelouch, whose *A Man and a Woman* (1966) used New Cinema techniques to dress up a traditional romantic plot.

Nevertheless, the French cinema of the 1960s was one of the most widely admired and imitated in the world. The Tradition of Quality had been challenged by a vigorous cinematic modernism.

Il Posto

20.30 *Il Posto*: an older employee's death allows the protagonist to move into the office amid a scramble for the slightly better empty desk at the front of the row.

ITALY: YOUNG CINEMA AND SPAGHETTI WESTERNS

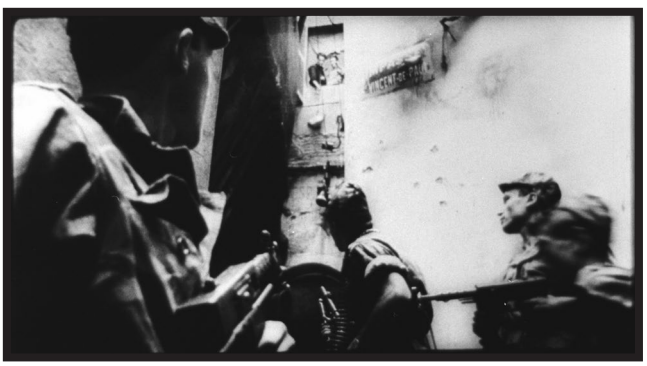
During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Italian film industry fared much better than the French. Higher ticket prices offset declining attendance, and Italian films gained a large share of domestic revenues. The international market welcomed horror films, comedies such as *Divorce Italian Style* (1961), and revived "mythological" epics such as *Hercules Unchained* (1959). US and European firms continued to coproduce Italian films. Cinecittà churned out films, and in 1962 Dino De Laurentiis built a huge studio outside Rome. By the early 1960s, Italy was Western Europe's leading production center.

The most visible directors were Fellini and Antonioni, whose early 1960s films solidified their reputations as auteurs (see Chapter 19). Expansion in the industry also enabled dozens of new directors to embark on careers. Most focused on popular genres, but a few became more celebrated and influential—often being characterized in relation to the Neorealist tradition.

A straightforward updating of Neorealism occurred in the work of Ermanno Olmi. From the first scene, which shows a young man waking up while his parents prepare breakfast, *Il Posto* ("The Job," aka *The Sound of Trumpets*, 1961) seems to continue the patient observation of daily life conducted in *Umberto D.* (see *Umberto D.*: The Maid Wakes Up p. 320). *Il Posto* is also characteristic of international Young Cinema in the way it loosens its narrative beyond the Neorealist norm. The young man's application for a civil service job, the petty office routines, and the melancholy lives of the clerks are presented in an anecdotal, digressive fashion (**20.30**). The romance plotline remains unfulfilled. Olmi's alternation of satiric touches with quiet sympathy resembles the attitude of young Czech filmmakers like Jiří Menzel.

Neorealism's socially critical impulse was intensified by new filmmakers identified with the left. Perhaps closest to the Neorealist source was the work of the Taviani brothers, Vittorio and Paolo, who would gain international prominence in the 1970s. Francesco Rosi, who had assisted Visconti on *La Terra trema*, merged a semidocumentary inquiry into a Sicilian bandit's death with nonchronological flashbacks in *Salvatore Giuliano* (1961). Avoiding a concentration on its protagonist, the film explores the Mafia and government forces that defeat the populist rebel.

Marco Bellocchio brought a New Left critique of orthodox Communism to the screen with *Fists in the Pocket* (1966) and *China Is Near* (1967). Gillo Pontecorvo, older than these filmmakers, made one of the most important contributions to the trend in *Battle of Algiers* (1966). This restaged semidocumentary drew upon the conventions of cinema vérité to render the immediacy of the Algerian war for independence (**20.31**); but, in using a complex



Battle of Algiers

20.31 Handheld shots give a sense of war reportage as the camera follows soldiers invading an apartment block in *Battle of Algiers*.

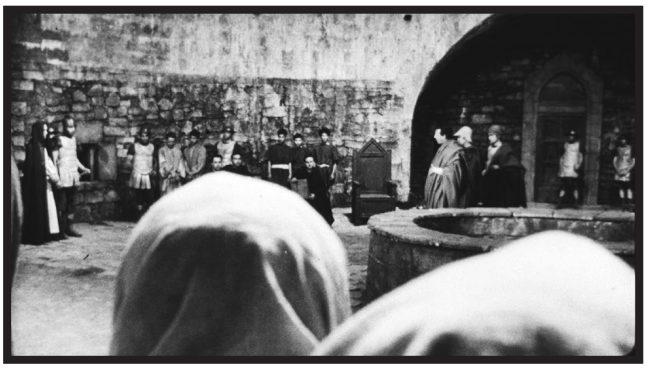
flashback construction, Pontecorvo, like Rosi, showed the influence of Resnais and other experimenters.

The Neorealist impulse also encountered a radical modernism in the work of Pier Paolo Pasolini. An unorthodox Marxist, a homosexual, and a nonbeliever steeped in Catholicism, Pasolini generated a furor in Italian culture. He was already famous as a poet and novelist when he entered filmmaking. He worked on several scripts, notably for Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*, and he cast his own films on a principle that Vittorio De Sica could have accepted: "I choose actors for what they are and not for what they pretend to be."[4] Yet Pasolini claimed to take from Charles Chaplin, Carl Dreyer, and Kenji Mizoguchi the idea that the filmmaker could reveal the epic and mythic dimensions of the world.

The bleak examination of urban poverty in *Accatone* (1961) and *Mamma Roma* (1962) was hailed as a return to Neorealism. Yet Pasolini's treatment of the milieu recalled Luis Buñuel's *Los Olvidados* (see Mexican Popular Cinema p. 364), not only in the scenes of savage violence but also in the disturbing dream imagery. Pasolini criticized Neorealism as being too tied to Resistance politics and too attached to a surface veracity. "In neorealism things are described with a certain detachment, with human warmth mixed with irony—characteristics which I do not have."[5]

Pasolini's first films also display what he called *pasticchio*, the "jumbling together" of a wide range of aural and visual materials. In compositions reminiscent of Renaissance paintings, characters spew forth vulgar language. Cinéma-vérité street scenes are accompanied by Bach or Mozart. Pasolini explained these disparities of technique by claiming that the peasantry and the lowest reaches of the urban working class retained a tie to preindustrial mythology, which his citation of great artworks of the past was meant to evoke.

The tactic of stylistic "contamination," as Pasolini called it, was perhaps least disturbing to audiences in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964), which—unlike his previous writings and films—won praise from the Church. The biblical tale was presented with greater realism than would be found in Hollywood or Cinecittà epics. Pasolini made Jesus a fierce, often impatient, preacher, and he dwelt on the characters' gnarled features, wrinkled skin, and broken teeth. *The Gospel*, however, is not simply a Neorealist scripture. Techniques are jumbled together. Bach and Prokofiev vie with the African *Missa Luba* on the sound track. Faces out of Renaissance paintings are filmed in abrupt zoom shots. Jesus's trial before Pilate is viewed by a handheld camera within a crowd of onlookers, as if a news reporter could not get close enough (**20.32**).



The Gospel According to St. Matthew

20.32 *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*: from Judas's point of view, we glimpse the trial past the heads of other onlookers.

Pasolini, the experimental writer turned filmmaker, somewhat resembles Alain Robbe-Grillet, while Bernardo Bertolucci represents an Italian parallel to the directors of the Nouvelle Vague. At age nineteen, Bertolucci was assistant director on *Accatone*, and Pasolini supplied the script for his first film, *La Commare secca* ("The Grim Reaper," 1962). A devoted cinéphile, Bertolucci spent his teenage vacations watching movies at the Cinémathèque Française. Although he identified strongly with the New Wave filmmakers, the careful construction and technical elegance of his films put them closer to the world of older modernists such as Resnais. In *La Commare secca*, offscreen detectives interrogate murder suspects, and flashbacks supply each suspect's version of events. This familiar modernist device, exploited in *Citizen Kane* and *Rashomon*, is here applied to a classic Neorealist situation—a purse theft that recalls both *Bicycle Thieves* and *Nights of Cabiria*.

Bertolucci's most celebrated film of the era was the autobiographical *Before the Revolution* (1964). A tale of a young man who falls in love with his aunt, it parades references to *Cahiers du cinéma* and Hollywood directors and displays the director's skill in art-cinema procedures of disorientation (**20.33–20.37**). Avoiding the radical disjunctions of Godard, Bertolucci made mildly modernist films of great technical polish, a quality that he would exploit in his successes of the 1970s and 1980s.

The industry's prosperity allowed many other directors to enter filmmaking. As in France, however, the period of opportunity was rather brief. A crisis emerged during 1963 and 1964, when the costume epic fell out of favor and major companies suffered from expensive failures, principally Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard* (1963) and Robert Aldrich's *Sodom and Gomorrah* (1963). In 1965, the government created an aid policy resembling

20.33 Disorienting time juggling in *Before the Revolution*: the aunt sorts photographs from her life on her bed.

20.34 After a close-up of some of the pictures ...

20.35 ... Bertolucci cuts to the bed, empty, and tracks in; she comes into the room in the background.

20.36, *left* Then Bertolucci resumes showing pictures, again spread on the bed ...

20.37, *right* ... before the aunt slowly turns the pictures over one by one. Is the shot of the empty bed out of order, or does it mark a new occasion on which the aunt returned to the bed and laid out the photos once again?

that of France: prizes for quality efforts, guaranteed bank loans, and credits from special funds.

While this policy led to a new filmmaking boom, producers turned to low-budget production in new genres, such as sex films and James Bond imitations. Mario Bava introduced new eroticism, baroque set designs, and bizarre camera movements into fantasy-based thrillers called *gialli* (*Black Sabbath*, 1960; *Blood and Black Lace*, 1964; **Color Plate 20.4**).

The most internationally successful Italian genre was the *spaghetti Western*, as it came to be known in English, and its most prominent practitioner was Sergio Leone. Leone was as dedicated a film fan as were the New Wave directors. He worked as assistant director for his father, Roberto Roberti, for De Sica (on *Bicycle Thieves*), and for American directors on runaway productions. After directing two costume epics, Leone moved to the genre that would restabilize the industry.

A Fistful of Dollars (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966) became the prototypical spaghetti Westerns. Laconic, stubble-jawed Clint Eastwood saunters through a world of grotesque absurdity modeled on Akira Kurosawa's samurai films. Leone's Westerns have a harsh realism—seedy towns, grubby ponchos, and violence more gruesome than most audiences had ever seen. But they also display an almost operatic splendor. Vast landscapes (filmed cheaply in Spain) are juxtaposed with widescreen close-ups of eyes or hands. Wide-angle lenses distort depth (**Color Plate 20.5**). Leone's flamboyant visual style pushes Western conventions to the level of formal ceremony, so a face-off in a bar becomes as prolonged and stylized as a confrontation in Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible.* Yet Leone often deflates his supercharged scenes with grim humor.

In each film, Ennio Morricone's musical score heroicizes the action with soaring strings or mocks it with an abrupt whistle or twang. Leone called Morricone his "scriptwriter" because the composer could replace a line of dialogue with a sudden expressive chord.[6] Morricone also helped Leone magnify the thematic implications of a film, as when, at the end of *For a Few Dollars More*, the parallel between a gunfight and a bullfight emerges not only from the corrida-shaped arena but also from throbbing Mexican brass on the sound track.

The huge success of the *Dollars* trilogy spurred the production of spaghetti Westerns and made Leone, Morricone, and Eastwood world famous. Although Leone worked in a popular genre, his florid, highly personal reinterpretation of its conventions proved as significant as the efforts of those art-cinema directors who revised and challenged the Neorealist tradition.

GREAT BRITAIN: KITCHEN SINK CINEMA

As Italy had cultivated the spaghetti Westerns, British filmmaking responded to the decline in filmgoing by creating new sorts of films. Hammer Films, a small independent production company, rose to prominence with a series of internationally popular horror films. Many were

loose remakes of 1930s Universal releases, including *Dracula* (aka *The Horror of Dracula*, 1958, Terence Fisher) and *The Mummy* (1959, Terence Fisher). Gorier than their predecessors, they also boasted polished production values, including elegant color cinematography (**Color Plate 20.6**).

The horror vogue paved the way for one of the most unusual films of this period, Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1959). Although it was not produced at Hammer, its scriptwriter had worked there. It concerned a shy young assistant cinematographer who is also a psychotic killer, making 16 mm films of his female victims in their death throes. Because Powell had codirected some of the most prestigious films of the postwar era, such as *The Red Shoes* and *A Matter of Life and Death* (see Chapter 17), critics could not fathom why he should take on this sordid tale. Yet *Peeping Tom* explores the roots of sexual violence with a complexity unusual for its time, presciently linking child abuse to the victim's later crimes. It also raises the question of how the film medium itself arouses erotic impulses (**20.38**).

Alongside horror films, "Kitchen Sink" films constituted another distinctive area of British cinema. 1940s British thrillers and romances had presented seedy sectors of working-class life, but the Kitchen Sink films went further by centering on class conflict and by utilizing modernist techniques. The principal directors emerged out of the Free Cinema group (see The National Film Board and Free Cinema p. 423), and their fiction features became Britain's equivalent of the French New Wave.

During the mid-1950s, plays and fiction centering on rebellious working-class protagonists created a class-conscious, "angry-young-man" trend. The most important of these works was John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*, directed on the stage by Tony Richardson in 1956. In 1959, Richardson and others formed a production company, Woodfall, in order to move from the documentary shorts of Free Cinema into feature filmmaking.

Peeping Tom

20.38 The image of one of the terrified victims in *Peeping Tom* is partially projected on the protagonist as he stands before the cinema screen.

Look Back in Anger

20.39 Like many Kitchen Sink films, *Look Back in Anger* stresses the grim industrial landscapes that surround the characters.

One of the first Woodfall films was Richardson's adaptation of *Look Back in Anger* (1959) starring Richard Burton. The alienated hero runs a candy stall and rants to his mates about the injustices of the class system. His best friend is his elderly landlady, whom he accompanies on a visit to her husband's grave (**20.39**). Like other films of this tendency, *Look Back in Anger*'s sober realism owes a good deal to location shooting.

Although *Look Back in Anger* was a commercial failure, another Woodfall film made at the same time, and released shortly before it, did well at the box office. *Room at the Top* (1959, Jack Clayton) was adapted from a novel about a cynical working-class hero who marries a factory owner's daughter in order to better his lot. Dwelling on the disillusionment of life in Britain's provincial cities, *Room at the Top* was unusual in its sexual frankness and its depiction of class resentment.

Perhaps the quintessential film of the Kitchen Sink trend is Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960). Arthur deeply resents his factory job and his passive parents (**20.40**), yet at the end he and his fiancée stand staring at a suburban housing development, a shot suggesting that they face the same dreary life.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning was based on an Alan Sillitoe novel, and he adapted his short story for Richardson's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962), in which a sullen reform-school prisoner trains as a cross-country runner. Like other angry-young-man films, *Loneliness* borrowed techniques from the French New Wave, including fast motion to suggest excitement during the hero's crimes and handheld camerawork for his exhilarating open-air jogging. Echoing Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*, *Loneliness* ends with a freeze-frame as the boys assemble gas masks.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning

20.40 The opening scene of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* shows the protagonist at work, as we hear his voice speaking over: "Don't let the bastards grind you down; that's one thing I've learned."

This Sporting Life

20.41 The hero of *This Sporting Life* in a rare cheerful interlude, playing with his lover's son as she looks on. Kitchen Sink films often contrast the peace of the countryside with the oppression of the industrialized city.

Tom Jones

20.42 Tom Jones turns and asks the audience if they saw his landlady pick his pocket (*Tom Jones*).

Lindsay Anderson, like the *Cahiers du cinéma* directors, had been a film critic, and he lambasted the British cinema for its stodgy refusal to face contemporary life. His first feature, *This Sporting Life* (1963), deals with a miner who tries to become a professional rugby player while carrying on a troubled affair with his landlady (**20.41**). Anderson indicts capitalist society through the corrupt sports promoters whom the hero encounters.

Kitchen Sink cinema was a short-lived trend. *This Sporting Life* failed, and the unexpected success of another, very different Woodfall film swerved filmmakers in new directions. Turning away from harsh realism, Richardson adapted a classic British comic novel in *Tom Jones* (1963), tapping Osborne for the screenplay. Backed by United Artists, the big-budget color film borrowed heavily from the French New Wave (**20.42**). It became a huge hit and won several Academy Awards.

Turning from working-class life in the industrial cities, filmmakers began to attach themselves to the vogue for portraying the lifestyle of "swinging London." English clothes and British rock and roll were suddenly fashionable, and London came to be seen as the capital of trendiness, social mobility, and sexual liberation. A series of films probing the shallowness of the "mod" lifestyle found success in art theaters around the world.

For example, in *Darling* (1965, John Schlesinger), a model rises in society through a string of love affairs and finally marries an Italian prince. *Darling* uses many techniques derived from the Nouvelle Vague, such as jump cuts and freeze-frames. *Alfie* (1966, Lewis Gilbert) offers a male reversal of *Darling*, in which a selfish charmer seduces a series of women, ducking all problems until confronted with the illegal abortion of one of his victims. The trend toward reflexive storytelling allowed the film to borrow the source play's technique of letting Alfie turn to the audience and share his thoughts.

Reisz's *Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment* (1966) joined the working-class hero of the Kitchen Sink period with a comic critique of swinging London. A man from a Marxist family tries desperately to prevent his wife from divorcing him and marrying a snobbish art-gallery owner. *Morgan* assimilates art-cinema conventions in its fantasy scenes, in which the hero compares people to gorillas and envisions his execution (**20.43**).

Success led creative talents to abandon Kitchen Sink realism. The box-office triumph of *Tom Jones* took Richardson to Hollywood, while Albert Finney, Richard Harris, Julie Christie, and Michael Caine became international stars. American financing of British films also changed. The low-budget realistic film was often associated with an

Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment

20.43 Morgan imagines his execution in a junkyard decorated with pictures of famous Marxists (*Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment*).

overtly political cinema. Many notable later British works were inventive genre pictures or expensive prestige films, often with American backing (e.g., *Doctor Zhivago*, David Lean, 1965).

YOUNG GERMAN FILM

In February 1962, at the Oberhausen Film Festival, a new impulse in West German cinema was articulated. Twenty-six young filmmakers signed a manifesto declaring the old cinema dead. In the face of a decaying industry and a dwindling audience, the signatories promised to help German cinema regain international renown. After three years of lobbying and public debate, the central government established the Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film ("Commission for Young German Film") in early 1965. This agency provided interest-free loans on the basis of scripts by directors who had proved themselves with notable short films.

During its brief existence, the Kuratorium financed nearly two dozen feature films. All were low-budget projects, in which the filmmaker paid the actors little and filmed almost completely on location. But many of these *Rücksackfilme* ("backpack films") had the shock of novelty. They depicted contemporary Germany as a land of broken marriages, rebellious youth, and casual sex. They suggested that the legacy of Nazism lingered into the present. And, after nearly two decades of respectful adaptations of classics, the Young German Film forged alliances with experimental writing. This was a cinema of *Autoren*—"authors." Unlike the French auteur critic-filmmakers, the young Germans sought a cinema of literary quality.

Later the Oberhauseners would admit that the manifesto was largely a bluff, but several signatories, such as Edgar Reitz and Volker Schlöndorff, managed to sustain careers. From a long-range international perspective, the two most noteworthy debuts of the period were those of Alexander Kluge and Jean-Marie Straub.

Trained as a lawyer, Kluge moved into experimental writing and—after seeing *Breathless*—filmmaking. He became the most tireless advocate of the Young German Film. A signer of the Oberhausen manifesto, Kluge played a central role in lobbying for the Kuratorium. He also helped establish West Germany's first film production school, at Ulm. During the same period, he made a series of shorts. In 1965, he was given Kuratorium funding for what became *Abschied von Gestern* ("Departure from Yesterday," aka *Yesterday Girl*, 1966). Kluge's stylistic flourishes—jump cuts, fast motion, interruptive titles, handheld tracking shots—and his fragmented, elliptical storytelling firmly locate *Yesterday Girl* in the 1960s Young Cinema. Anita G. could be a French New Wave heroine: she drifts though cities, tries to hold a job, indulges in petty theft, has love affairs, and winds up pregnant and in prison.

Unlike his French contemporaries, though, Kluge sought to give Anita a historical significance. Her story is interrupted by a children's story from the 1920s, Direct Cinema interviews, and old photographs and songs. Anita's plight illustrates the continuity between the old Germany and the new; the film's epigraph is "We are separated from yesterday not by an abyss but by the changed situation." Although Kluge's narrative technique does not encourage the audience to identify wholly with Anita, there are moments of subdued pathos (**20.44**). After the international recognition granted *Yesterday Girl*, Kluge became the Young German Film's most articulate theorist, championing films that would free the audience's imagination in new ways.

Far less public a figure was the French-born Jean-Marie Straub. As a youth, he was deeply impressed by Robert Bresson's *Les Dames du Bois du Boulogne* and the films of Lang and Dreyer. With his wife, Danièle Huillet, Straub adapted two works of Heinrich Böll as *Machorka-Muff* (1963) and *Nicht versöhnt* (*Not Reconciled*, 1965).

Like Kluge, Straub collaged fictional and documentary materials. *Machorka-Muff*, which points up the rise of militarism in postwar Germany, consists of snippets of dialogue, action, and internal monologue, all intercut with landscapes and newspaper headlines. The film squeezes Böll's novelette *Berlin Diary* into eighteen minutes.

Not Reconciled is even more daringly compressed. In only fifty minutes, Straub and Huillet trace a continuity

20.44 *Yesterday Girl*: On the run, Anita must change her clothes at the roadside.

Not Reconciled

20.45 Depth and decentering in *Not Reconciled*.

between World War I, World War II, and the present through the story of three generations of a family. The deliberately inexpressive acting, the great number of characters, the unsignaled switches between present and past, and the staccato fragmentation of the scenes make *Not Reconciled* almost incomprehensible on a first viewing. The plot complexities are accompanied by a self-conscious visual beauty (**20.45**) and direct sound—a rarity among young filmmakers, who typically kept costs low by using postdubbing. Although German distributors refused to handle *Not Reconciled*, it won Straub and Huillet Kuratorium funding for a feature on the life of Bach. This film and their later ones would have considerable international influence.

By late 1967, the Young German Film could point to many successes. *Yesterday Girl* and Volker Schlöndorff's *Young Törless* (1966) each won eight festival prizes, and other films did well on the international market. But young directors, differing on principles and forced to compete for funding, became divided. The mainstream industry pressed for a new form of subsidy, and in January 1968, the Film Promotion Law went into effect. It shut out first-time directors and favored producers of quick, low-budget commercial series. More daring projects were discouraged by a provision that refused sponsorship to films that were "contrary to the constitution or to moral or religious sentiments."[7]

Some filmmakers used Kuratorium money to make spy thrillers and bedroom comedies aimed at the young audience. One director remarked: "I prefer filming a naked girl rather than chattering about problems."[8] Thanks to other funding sources, filmmakers critical of the German "economic miracle" would make their voices heard in years to come.

NEW CINEMA IN THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE

Young Cinema in the Soviet Union

The "thaw" after Stalin's death in 1953 ended quickly: in the political sphere, with the 1956 crushing of the Hungarian Revolution; in the artistic domain, with the 1958 attacks on Boris Pasternak's novel *Dr. Zhivago.* But, in 1961, Nikita Khrushchev launched a new de-Stalinization campaign, calling for openness and greater democracy. Intellectuals and artists responded eagerly, and a Soviet youth culture began to emerge.

In the cinema, most older directors continued to work in traditional ways, but Mikhail Romm displayed a more liberal stance in *Nine Days of One Year* (1962), a social-problem film about nuclear radiation. Although Romm had been a major Stalinist filmmaker, he proved a progressive force after the thaw, training and encouraging several young directors.

A new emphasis on youth could be seen in several films about children. Other filmmakers, like their counterparts abroad, concentrated on young adults in the contemporary world. Vasily Shukshin, a fiction writer, directed *There Was a Lad* (1964), in which a good-natured trucker encounters teenage life in the USSR (**20.46**).

The most celebrated young director was Andrei Tarkovsky, who studied under Romm at VGIK. Like many of his generation, Tarkovsky became interested in European art cinema, particularly the work of Bergman, Bresson, and Fellini. His first feature, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962), won the Grand Prize at Venice and became one of the most widely admired Soviet films of the 1960s.

There Was a Lad

20.46 Youth culture in socialist humanism: in *There Was a Lad*, a disdainful Muscovite confronts locals at a club dance.

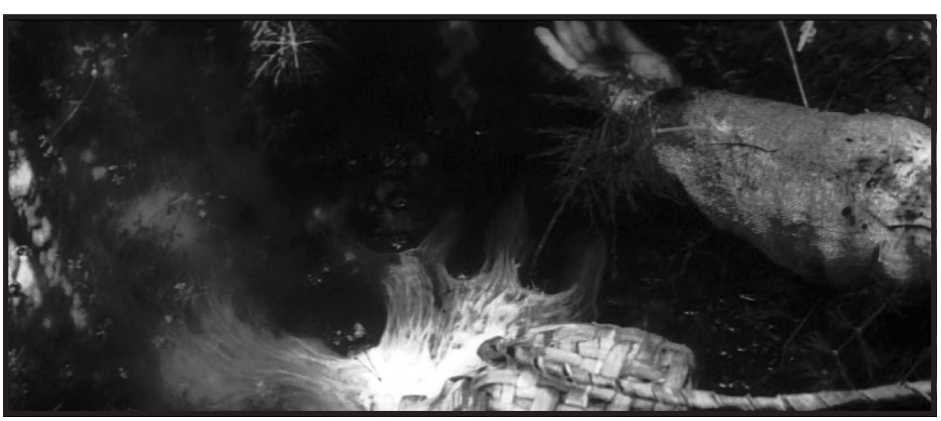
Ivan's Childhood

20.47, 20.48 Tarkovsky's battle-scarred landscapes in *Ivan's Childhood* have a Bergmanesque starkness and stand in contrast to the lush tranquility of nature in Ivan's imagination.

The plot of *Ivan's Childhood* adheres to many conventions of the Soviet World War II film. A boy vows to avenge his parents' deaths and becomes a scout for a band of partisans. But Tarkovsky treats this material with an unusual lyricism (**20.47**, **20.48**). The wordless opening sequence, a dream in which Ivan floats through the trees to greet his mother and take a drink of water, establishes a cluster of visual motifs. After Ivan has died at the hands of the Nazis, the film concludes with a glowing sequence of fantasy images. The ambiguity is characteristic of 1960s art cinema; the sequence could be Ivan's final reverie, or it could be the filmmaker's free elaboration and comment. The authorities resented Tarkovsky's effort "to replace narrative causality with poetic articulations."[9]

The new liberalization soon ended. In 1964, Khrushchev was forced to resign, and the conservative Leonid Brezhnev took over as party secretary. Under the rubric "harmonious development," Brezhnev halted reforms and tightened control of culture. Nonconformist films were reshot or banned. Andrei Konchalovsky's *Asya's Happiness*, finished in 1966, was withdrawn for its supposed insults to the peasantry. Alexander Askoldov's *Commissar* (1967) was suppressed for its positive portrayal of Jewish characters. After Grigori Chukhrai's *Beginning of an Unknown Era* (1967) was shelved, he closed his experimental studio.

The fate of Tarkovsky's second feature exemplifies the difficulties filmmakers faced. *Andrei Rublev* (1965), a long, somber drama of the life of a fifteenth-century icon painter, followed the strategy Tarkovsky had pursued in *Ivan's Childhood*. Once more, he took a formulaic genre—here, the biography of the great artist—and infused it with mysteriously poetic imagery (**20.49**, **20.50**). Surrounded by viciousness and cruelty, Rublev stops speaking, gives up painting, and abandons religious faith. Some viewers saw Tarkovsky's film as an allegory of art crushed by social oppression. Goskino administrators denied it a release.



Andrei Rublev

20.49 The mystical tactility of Tarkovsky in *Andrei Rublev*: a bloody hand slumping into a stream produces a milky stain.

Andrei Rublev

20.50 As Tartars pillage a town, geese float down from the sky (*Andrei Rublev*).

Despite political pressures, several films of the Brezhnev era broached issues of importance to youth and intellectuals. Two significant women directors emerged. Larisa Shepitko centered *Wings* (1966) on a female pilot learning to become a school supervisor. Kira Muratova's *Brief Encounters* (1968) shows a man from the viewpoints of the two women who love him (**20.51**).

The studios of the Soviet republics, closer to folk traditions and less vulnerable to official reprimands, produced some oblique, poetic films. Older than the "new" directors, Serge Paradzhanov grew up in Georgia, graduated from VGIK in 1951, and during the 1950s made several films in Ukraine. His *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1965) tells of a man haunted by the death of the woman he loved. The folklike story, however, is rendered in a flurry of modernist techniques. Jerkily handheld, the camera races through landscapes. Paradzhanov gives us shots taken from treetops, ceremonially still compositions, and abrupt subjective images (**20.52**). Paradzhanov's aggressive style made authorities limit the film's distribution in the USSR but also helped it garner over a dozen international prizes.

Once Brezhnev's regime was firmly in place, Paradzhanov, Tarkovsky, and other innovative directors found it difficult to launch projects. Instead, the industry and the Party made Sergei Bondarchuk's massive *War and Peace* (1967) the official emblem of Soviet film. The film was trumpeted as the most costly production in history and was successful in the export market. Despite cautiously inserting a few contemporary techniques (slow-motion, handheld camera), Bondarchuk revived the monumental tradition. A new period of "stabilization"—later to be known as "stagnation"—set in, and not until the early 1970s would Soviet cinema and other arts have the chance to explore new avenues.

New Waves in Eastern Europe

The Soviet Union's resistance to experimentation had its parallels in Eastern European countries. Still, in the early 1960s, new waves sprang up in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Hungary.

During the late 1950s, Eastern Europe's economy strengthened, and countries sought to enter Western markets. Films proved to be valuable export items. In addition, economic reforms led many governments to increase artistic freedom. Each new wave typically participated in a broader cultural renaissance including literature, drama, painting, and music.

Several Eastern European countries developed production structures that were more decentralized than the USSR's rigid hierarchy. Smaller units allowed directors and screenwriters to work independently. As a result, they were freer to try fresh subjects, themes, forms, and styles

Brief Encounters

Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors

20.51, *left* A Godard-style shot from *Brief Encounters*.

20.52, *right* A man is struck by an axe, and blood dribbles down the camera lens (*Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*).

than were their Soviet counterparts. The films that emerged linked Eastern European cinema to the art cinema that had been flourishing in Western Europe since the war. Because Eastern Europe had always imported more foreign films than had the Soviet Union, directors and audiences were more aware of other new cinemas. And, as Eastern European films entered festivals and international distribution circuits, Western viewers encountered innovative examples of cinematic modernism.

Young Cinema in Poland In the early 1960s, it might have seemed that Polish filmmaking had lost none of its force. Andrzej Wajda's *Innocent Sorcerers* (1960) adapted his style to an intimate subject, a couple's night together. *Mother Joan of the Angels* (1961), by Jerzy Kawalerowicz, offered a daring tale of demonic possession in a convent. By 1960, the Polish system of producing films by independent units was working smoothly, and strict Socialist Realism was firmly in the past.

Yet political pressures were intensifying. Films were seldom banned, but they might be denounced by critics and politicians, and this slowed the progress of older directors. Kawalerowicz spent six years preparing *Pharaoh* (1966), a visually impressive tale of the decline of ancient Egypt's powerful New Kingdom. For a few years after *Innocent Sorcerers*, Wajda worked on international coproductions. His next Polish film, *Ashes* (1965), was a vigorously satiric epic of the Napoleonic wars. A Candide-like hero wanders through the countryside, encountering a series of monumentally staged battle scenes. The film was not well received, but from 1968 on, Wajda became prolific again.

In the early 1960s, there was the possibility that Poland's younger directors would cultivate a modest, realistic approach in contrast to the "baroque" tendencies of Wajda and Kawalerowicz. A few intimate films based on sociological observation did appear, but the two most celebrated young directors avoided such realism and moved toward a strongly dramatic, technically flamboyant approach to youthful subjects.

Roman Polanski was an actor before going to film school and attracting international attention with a short, *Two Men and a Wardrobe* (1958). After spending a few years in Paris, he returned to Poland to make *Knife in the Water* (1962). At one level, the film is an intimate suspense drama. An unhappily married couple take a young hitchhiker along on a sailing trip, and the tension builds as the husband taunts the young man mercilessly. *Knife in the Water* could be defended as politically conformist in attacking the new "red bourgeoisie" who lived in Western luxury. But the young man can hardly be a positive hero because he is at best naively confused and at worst somewhat cynical.

Polanski avoided most of the technical innovations of the European new cinemas, relying on orthodox cutting and vivid deep-focus shots that keep the characters in tense confrontation (**20.53**). *Knife in the Water* relies on art-cinema narrative conventions. The opening derives from *Voyage to Italy*, although by 1962 Polanski needed none of the expository dialogue that Roberto Rossellini required: we can infer that the couple are quarreling when the wife gets out of the car to let her husband drive. The film's finale, with the couple reunited in their car and the husband wondering if the young man is really dead, became an emblem of the lack of closure in 1960s cinema.

Jerzy Skolimowski, scriptwriter for *Innocent Sorcerers* and *Knife in the Water*, became the Polish director closest to the Parisian Nouvelle Vague. *Identification Marks: None* (1964), assembled out of film-school footage, shows a draft-dodger moving through Polish youth culture. *Walkover* (1965) centers on a prizefighter who eventually wins a factory boxing match. *Barrier* (1966) draws on Felliniesque fantasy to portray contemporary Polish youth rebelling against cynicism and bureaucracy. In each film, Skolimowski's hero is a sensitive drifter disillusioned by society but still hoping to find happiness in a woman's love.

Skolimowski's films exhibit the casual improvisation we find in early Truffaut or Godard. They also have a flashy, almost exhibitionist style. There are long takes, with complex camera movements and zooms; abstract, often perplexing compositions (**20.54**); and surreal images of the contemporary city (**20.55**). In *Identification Marks: None*, after a traffic accident a hand covers the lens; only then do we realize that the shot represents the protagonist's optical point of view.

Knife in the Water

20.53 Harsh, Wellesian depth in *Knife in the Water*.

Identification Marks: None

20.54 Dazzling reflections in *Identification Marks: None*.

Walkover

20.55 False depth and flatness in *Walkover*.

Closely Watched Trains

20.56 After a hospital is bombed, Menzel's flat, Keatonesque shot shows Miloš, miraculously unscathed, lifting his coat off the rack (*Closely Watched Trains*).

The late 1960s marked an end to the Polish School. After *Knife in the Water*, Polanski went into exile. Skolimowski made *Le Départ* (1967) in Belgium. The banning of his next Polish production, *Hands Up!* (1968), led him to work in England and Western Europe.

The Czech New Wave Czechoslovakia offered more favorable conditions for a New Cinema. The years from 1962 to 1966 saw steps toward "market socialism" and a mood of reform. The cinema took an active part in cultural renewal. A decentralized production system placed a director-scriptwriter team at the head of each unit. As television became the main source of popular entertainment, the cinema became subsidized by the state. By 1968, production units had become independent and censorship had diminished.

The Czech New Wave crested in the period between 1963 and 1967, winning international prizes and even Academy Awards. Although some nations in the Soviet sphere disapproved of the new Czech films, elsewhere they were almost as influential as the Nouvelle Vague.

The younger directors, most of them graduates of the film school FAMU, made their entry with short films in the early 1960s. All the filmmakers knew Italian Neorealism, the Polish School, and the French New Wave, and all to some degree felt the effects of Direct Cinema. But, like most new waves, the Czech phenomenon can only loosely be considered a stylistic movement. For the most part filmmakers shared only conditions of work, thematic concerns, and an urge to move beyond Socialist Realist formulas.

One tendency was toward an art-cinema realism. Jaromil Jireš's *The Cry* (1963), often considered the first manifestation of the Czech New Wave, used nonactors and Direct Cinema technique to explore the life of a couple expecting a baby. Jiří Menzel, who found international success with *Closely Watched Trains* (1966) and *Capricious Summer* (1967), took to an extreme the shifting of tone that Neorealism made a major principle of postwar cinema. In *Closely Watched Trains*, Menzel mixes solemn issues with erotic jokes, satire on authority, and moments of sheer absurdity. The film shifts instantly from mocking the young hero's petty ambitions to appreciating his courage, however inadvertent, in participating in partisan sabotage. Individual images display reflexive wit (**20.56**).

The single Czech feature made by Ivan Passer presents a gentler blend of comedy and social criticism. A sketch of the reunion of two musicians, *Intimate Lighting* (1965) contrasts city and country manners, amateur and professional music making, and traditional and modern conceptions of women's roles. The fragmentary incidents have a muted pathos and humor: a hen hoping to hatch a car, hosts and guests patiently trying to drink eggnog that will not flow (**20.57**).

Miloš Forman was also influenced by Neorealism and Direct Cinema, but his films present more caustic social criticism than do those of Menzel and Passer. His first feature, *Black Peter* (1963), centers on a teenager similar to Menzel's Miloš. Barely holding down a job, constantly at odds with his father, clumsily seeking romance, Peter becomes a comic emblem of confused Czech youth. In the first half of *Loves of a Blonde* (1965), Forman focuses with cruel hilarity on the effects of an army unit assigned to a factory town where women vastly outnumber men. In the second half, the heroine pursues a traveling piano player to Prague, where she learns that neither he nor his parents care for her. The film's grim undertones blend with Forman's satire of meaningless work and official morality.

At the center of *Black Peter* and *Loves of a Blonde* are long seriocomic scenes of couples flirting at a dance. In *The Firemen's Ball* (1967), Forman builds an entire plot around such a situation. Concentrating on the single evening of a party honoring a retiring fire chief, Forman fills

Intimate Lighting

20.57 The final shot of *Intimate Lighting*: obstinate eggnog.

his film with incisive running gags and revelations of human vanities (**Video 20.3**). As the ball goes on, prizes are stolen, an impromptu beauty contest creates a scandal, couples make love, and an old man's home burns down. Stylistically, *The Firemen's Ball* exemplifies the emerging worldwide tendency to use long lenses and documentary techniques to film staged material (**20.58**). Forman's portrait of socialist society, with its frustrated sexuality, incompetent bureaucracy, and petty pilfering, drew torrents of criticism.

Besides impulses toward satiric realism, there were efforts to find a more formally complex approach on the model of Resnais, Fellini, or Robbe-Grillet. Jan Němec's first feature, *Diamonds of the Night* (1964), takes as its situation two young men's escape from a train carrying them to a concentration camp. This incident, a likely basis for a Socialist Realist war film, triggers an exercise in 1960s modernism. The physical frenzy of the boys' flight is rendered via documentary techniques: handheld camera, high-contrast cinematography (**20.59**), and a sound track dominated by gasping and thrashing noises. Němec goes on to interrupt the action with fragmentary, jumbled flashbacks that mix indiscernibly with fantasy scenes (**20.60**).

If *Diamonds of the Night* owes something to *Hiroshima mon amour*, Němec's next film, *Report on the Party and the Guests* (1968), echoes *Last Year at Marienbad*. As if to compensate for the virtual absence of dialogue in *Diamonds of the Night*, Němec fills this film with talk—the empty absurdities of bourgeois life. These are only the prelude to a symbolic critique of a Stalinist police state. *Party and the Guests* proved to be the most controversial film of Czech New Cinema.

The Firemen's Ball

20.58 The long lens picks out details in documentary fashion (*The Firemen's Ball*).

Diamonds of the Night

20.59 Harsh Direct Cinema techniques rendering the boys' escape in *Diamonds of the Night*.

Diamonds of the Night

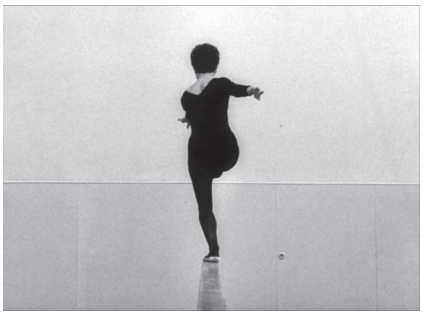
20.60 The central fantasy of the empty tramcar in Němec's *Diamonds of the Night*.

The New Wave pushed toward even purer fantasy. In Vojtěch Jasný's *Cassandra Cat* (1963), a magical cat wreaks havoc when its special eyeglasses turn people different colors. Jan Schmidt's *End of August in the Hotel Ozone* (1966), about survivors of an atomic war, became an abstract political allegory. Němec's third feature, *Martyrs of Love* (1966), consists of a trio of three surrealistic tales on the border between fantasy and reality. In a remark that would have provoked the wrath of Communist officials a few years before, Němec summed up the attitude of many Czech filmmakers: "The director must create his own world, a world independent of reality."[10]

The work of Vera Chytilová partakes of several of these trends. Her *Something Different* (1963) intercuts the lives of Eva, a gymnast who trains arduously, and Vera, a bored housewife. Because Eva and Vera never meet, the viewer is obliged to compare their situations. Chytilová also links the stories through film style. The piano music accompanying Eva's training is heard over scenes of Vera's life, while shots in one story graphically resemble those in another (**20.61**, **20.62**). Eva's story is filmed in a modified Direct Cinema style, while Vera's is presented as a more conventional fiction, setting up an interplay between two trends in the Czech New Wave itself.

With *Daisies* (1966), Chytilová moves into symbolic fantasy, satirizing a society of consumption and waste. Like *Something Different*, the film concentrates on two women, but now their personalities are robotically identical. Taking them through a string of sight gags and escalating bouts of eating and mayhem, Chytilová mocks female stereotypes when special effects reduce the heroines to cut-outs and pin-ups (**Color Plate 20.7**).

Menzel, Passer, Forman, Němec, and Chytilová were the most widely known filmmakers of the New Wave, but many others played a role in reviving Czech production. During 1966 and 1967, the government attempted to



Something Different

20.61, 20.62 In *Something Different*, Vera's ignoring the bike boy cuts to another vertical and centered shot in Eva's practice session.

retighten cultural policy. Authorities attacked liberal writers and banned several films, including *Daisies* and *Report on the Party and the Guests*. The year 1968, an important benchmark in cinemas around the world, would put the Czech New Wave to a crucial test.

Yugoslavian New Film Since 1948, Yugoslavia had evolved its own nationalistic, market-based version of socialism. In the 1960s, workers' councils gained more power over industrial production, a tendency that benefited cinema workers. A revised film law of 1962 gave regional republics greater autonomy in filmmaking and allowed filmmakers to create independent firms. Such companies could compete for generous state subsidies. Soon the number of production units tripled.

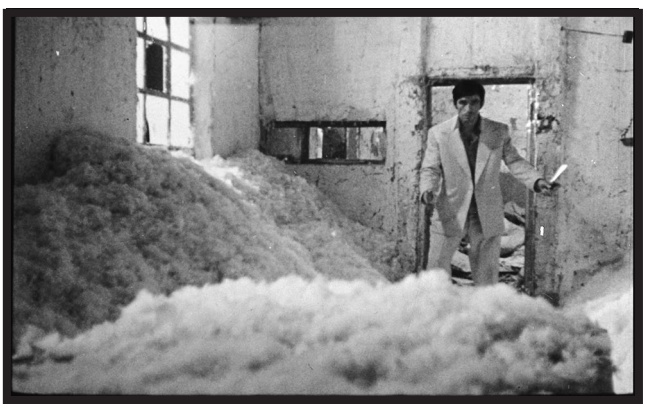
These conditions encouraged Yugoslavia's *Novi film* ("New Film"). Influenced by Neorealism, the Nouvelle Vague, and recent Eastern European cinemas, young directors advocated experimenting with film form in the name of socialist humanism. As in other countries, filmmakers and critics wrote for periodicals and translated articles from foreign journals.

The peak period of New Film, from 1963 to 1968, revealed active groups in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. Two directors had particularly strong influence outside Yugoslavia.

Aleksandar Petrović, whose *Two* (1961) helped launch New Film, represented an "intimate cinema" that examined personal problems in contemporary society. His *Days* (1963) portrays the empty life of a young urban couple. *Three* (1966) is a triptych of World War II stories. Petrović called for "personal films" that "claimed the right to subjective interpretations of the lives of individuals and society, the right to 'open metaphors,' leaving room for viewers to think and feel for themselves."[11]

Petrović's most widely known film, *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (1967), is an open-ended study of a tough Romani merchant of goose feathers whose romantic involvement with two women leads him to murder (**20.63**). Petrović relies on long lenses and handheld shots, and he uses nonactors speaking their various native languages. The overall effect is of pseudo-documentary realism in the portrayal of an oppressed minority.

Far more freewheeling, close to the flamboyant experimentation of the Czech fantasists, are the works of Dušan Makavejev. Makavejev's first feature, *Man Is Not a Bird* (1965), announced his penchant for deflating the pretentions of politics with earthy humor. In one scene, lovers copulate to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony played for the edification of workers. In *Love Affair, or the Tragedy of a Switchboard Operator* (1967), Makavejev utilizes a collage form that owes something to Resnais and Godard but that is treated with his own bawdy humor. While Chytilová's *Something Different* crosscuts two simultaneous lines of action, Makavejev alternates the progress of a love affair with flashforwards that show the affair's grisly outcome. The film also includes newsreel footage and lectures on criminal behavior. The viewer learns quickly that the affair ends in the death of Isabella. But which of her two lovers killed her? The film mixes gruesome scenes (an autopsy, a search for rats) with racy comedy and satire on socialist ideals.



I Even Met Happy Gypsies

20.63 Armed with a knife, the protagonist enters the mattress-stuffing room at the climax of *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*.

At one level, Makavejev's next film, *Innocence Unprotected* (1968), is a Direct Cinema inquiry into the life of Aleksic Dragoljub, a professional acrobat who also made the first Serbo-Croatian sound movie. Interviews with Aleksic and his surviving collaborators are interrupted by intertitles, newsreels, and extracts from the original film (also called *Innocence Unprotected*). Makavejev further "decorates" the found footage with tinting, toning, hand-coloring (**Color Plate 20.8**), and ironic musical accompaniment. The collage strategy allows Makavejev to mock Nazi and Communist politics, satirize show business, celebrate naive filmmaking, and pay tribute to the national pride expressed in Aleksic's "very good old film." Through their collage form, *Love Affair* and *Innocence Unprotected* create the sort of "open metaphors" Petrović had called for in New Film.

New Cinema in Hungary

The French New Wave had a strong influence on Hungarian cinema. As one filmmaker put it, "Everybody went to Paris to see Truffaut's and Godard's films.... At the time, people imitated them but that was liberating."[12] Such influences would not have had much consequence, however, without favorable production circumstances.

As the political scene liberalized and television became more popular, production was decentralized. In 1958, the Béla Balázs studio (named after the pioneer film theorist and scriptwriter) was created to give graduates of the film academy a chance to make shorts and first features. In 1963, the industry adopted the Polish "creative film unit" system, which assigned each director a place in a unit but also allowed him or her to propose a project to another unit. The units were coordinated by MAFILM, which also allocated studio facilities. The industry's reorganization yielded an output of twenty or more films per year, twice the 1950s average.

Like other new cinemas, Hungary's included two generations. In the early 1960s, older directors such as Karoly Makk, Zoltán Fábrí, and István Gaal seized new opportunities. Most widely seen was the work of Miklós Jancsó, who made his first feature in 1958, when he was thirty-seven, and who achieved fame with the films he made after he turned forty (see Miklós Jancsó box).

MIKLÓS JANCSÓ

Miklós Jancsó graduated from the Hungarian Film Academy in 1950, at the age of twenty-nine. After making some short films, he directed a fairly orthodox feature in 1958. His second feature, *Cantata* (1962), a story of a young doctor seeking to rekindle his relationship with his peasant father, was filmed in the manner of Antonioni, a key influence on Jancsó. Not until the mid-1960s did he emerge as a distinct auteur.

Jancsó's major films concentrated on upheavals in Hungary's tumultuous history: World War II, military coups, and popular rebellions. He follows Soviet Montage cinema in creating drama out of collective action and historical movements. In Jancsó films, individuals have little psychological identity. Instead, they become emblematic of social classes or political factions. The drama emerges out of the ways in which they are caught in a historical process.

Distancing us from the characters, the films avoid subjective devices like fantasy and refuse flashbacks and flashforwards. What comes to the fore are naked displays of power. In *The Red and the White* (1967), after a peasant woman has numbly obeyed a Cossack officer's order to strip, a superior appears and curtly orders the troops to execute the officer. In *The Round-Up* (1965), the occupying Austrians promise a peasant that he can escape execution if he can find a partisan who has killed more men than he has. Before suffering torture or execution, victims must march in file, form circles, strip or lie down or swim a river—that is, undergo absurd ceremonies that merely display their subjection to the will of authority. Coming from a generation appalled by the revelation of wartime atrocities and the Nazi death camps, Jancsó suggests that power is exercised through public humiliation and minute control of the victim's body.

Jancsó's manner of treatment suits his dramas. After *My Way Home* (1965), he exploited abnormally long takes; the average shot in *Silence and Cry* (1968) runs two and a half minutes. Jancsó presents the moment-by-moment oscillations in power by means of a dynamic camera that renders every situation fluid and filled with tension. To illustrate even a single Jancsó shot would require several pages. In *The Round-Up*, the camera often emphasizes geometrical patterns in the Austrians' search for partisans (**20.64**). *The Red and the White* uses both immense landscape views and medium shots, sometimes tracking, panning, and zooming all at once (**20.65–20.70**).

In few auteurs' work do structure, style, and theme mesh so precisely as in Jancsó's. His narrative construction and cinematic technique present a spectacle of power that is at once abstractly symbolic and concretely historical. He became the principal example of the artistic originality and seriousness that could be achieved in an Eastern European film industry.

(continued)

MIKLÓS JANCSÓ, continued

The Round-Up

20.64 *The Round-Up*: geometric figures of power and oppression fill the wide screen.

The Red and the White

20.65–20.70 The floating fluidity of Jancsó's long takes in *The Red and the White*:
20.65 While the young man flees the White soldiers at the river ...

The Red and the White

20.66 ... comes up to the hospital cabin ...

The Red and the White

20.67 ... and hides among the wounded ...

The Red and the White

20.68 ... before a nurse comes out ...

The Red and the White

20.69 ... and the camera follows her to the edge of the cabin ...

The Red and the White

20.70 ... where she and the other nurses discover the Whites' atrocities at the river's edge.

Most of the younger Hungarian directors had graduated from the Academy for Theatre and Cinematography during the late 1950s. Entranced not only by the Nouvelle Vague but also by the Polish Young Cinema and European auteurs such as Bergman and Antonioni, these directors pursued the goals of most new cinemas: to rethink their country's past and to present a portrait of contemporary youth.

For example, István Szabó presented his films as "the autobiography of a generation."[13] *The Age of Daydreaming* (1964) portrays a new socialist technocracy: confident young people wear Western sports clothes, take beach vacations, and talk of their love affairs while watching footage of Nazi horrors. Szabó sometimes romanticizes their lives with Nouvelle Vague techniques, as in lyrical slow-motion shots or citations of Truffaut, but as the film goes on, it questions material success.

Szabó's next film, *Father* (1966), probes the main character's mind in a way typical of the European art cinema generally. As in the films of Kluge and Straub, a play with time serves to pose questions about politics and history. Tako believes his father to be a war hero, but the son finds that history is more complicated. An interplay of memory, dreams, fantasy, and history in the hero's experience creates the ambiguity characteristic of 1960s modernism. Just as *Hiroshima mon amour* treats newsreels as both documents and symbolic commentary, Szabó inserts footage of the 1956 uprising into his story, generating both a mild collage effect and a plausible sense that the characters are involved in the historical event (**20.71**, **20.72**). In his attempt to fuse the concerns of contemporary youth with a critical study of his nation's past, Szabó typified the efforts of most directors in Eastern Europe's new waves.

Father

20.71 In *Father*, Szabó cuts from newsreel shots of the 1956 Hungarian rebellion ...

Father

20.72 ... to shots of his heroes marching with a crowd (*Father*).

THE JAPANESE NEW WAVE

After a high-school girl is raped by a thuggish student, she agrees to seduce older men so that he can shake them down. When she becomes pregnant, the student gets money for her abortion by sleeping with an older woman. As the student is beaten to death by a gang, the young woman, riding with a man who has picked her up, tries to escape and is dragged to her death.

Aptly titled *Cruel Story of Youth* (1960), this film by the young Nagisa Oshima would scarcely have been recognizable as Japanese to Western connoisseurs of Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi, and Yasujiro Ozu. Yet it is a typical product of the Japanese New Wave. The movement is all the more remarkable in being one of the few new cinemas deliberately created by a film industry.

An Industry in Search of Youth

The Japanese studios had jumped on the youth bandwagon early. During the mid-1950s, the newly revived swordfight movie catered to adolescent boys, while romantic melodramas were aimed at teenage girls. In 1956, *Season of the Sun*, adapted from a scandalous bestseller, launched a cycle of "sun-tribe" (*taiyozoku*) movies in which spoiled young people pursued sex and crime. The most controversial sun-tribe film was *Crazed Fruit* (1956), in which brothers spend a summer in gambling, drinking, and erotic rivalry at a beach resort (**20.73**). Crime thrillers, rock-and-roll musicals, and even Westerns became mainstays of lower-end studios such as Nikkatsu and Toei.

Thanks in part to youth-friendly fare, 1958 movie attendance rose to just more than a billion, a postwar high. Shochiku, the most conservative studio, noted its rivals'

Crazed Fruit

20.73 In *Crazed Fruit*, lovers spend the night in a sailboat. The boy is played by Yujiro Ishihara, who became the top teenage star of 1950s Japan.

triumphs and the box-office success of young French cinema. The company decided to launch a Japanese New Wave. In 1959, the firm promoted a young assistant director, Nagisa Oshima, and allowed him to direct his own scripts. The success of his first films led Shochiku to promote other assistants. Nikkatsu followed suit, giving newly appointed directors substantial assignments.

At first, New Wave films attracted critical praise and proved somewhat popular with young audiences. But they could not halt a downturn in the box office. By 1963, the popularity of color television had pulled attendance to half its 1958 level. The studios tried desperately to win back the audience by lowering ticket prices, by making more violent swordplay films (e.g., the *Zatoichi* blind swordsman series), and by pioneering new genres—the *yakuza* (gambler-gangster) film and the "pink film" (soft-core pornography). Some of the New Wave directors contributed interestingly to these trends, but soon most of the filmmakers quit their studios.

Only a few years earlier, this would have meant leaving filmmaking. Unlike European countries, Japan had a strong, vertically integrated studio system, and until the 1960s no one could easily work outside it. Moreover, the government did not encourage new talent through subsidies or prizes. But theaters' habits of showing double features created a larger appetite for releases than the studios could profitably satisfy. As a result, many New Wave directors were able to create independent production companies. While young directors' films were sometimes distributed by the big studios, a central role was played by the Art Theater Guild (ATG), a chain of specialized theaters. In 1964, the ATG began financing and distributing films, and it became the mainstay of the New Wave generation.

Like young cinemas elsewhere, the Japanese New Wave attacked mainstream cinematic traditions. Complex flashback structures, intrusions of fantasy and symbolism, and experiments with shot design, color, cutting, and camerawork became common. Directors splashed jarring compositions across the wide screen, and handheld camera work and disjunctive editing came to the fore. But because mainstream Japanese films had explored such techniques before, they were perhaps less disruptive than the subjects, themes, and attitudes portrayed in the New Wave works.

No films had so savagely criticized Japanese society, revealing oppression and conflict behind the image of a tranquil, prosperous nation. Theft, murder, and rape were rendered casually. The directors flaunted the vulgarity of their heroes and heroines, and often the critique was framed in political terms. The Japanese directors went further than even their German contemporaries in showing that authoritarian forces continued to rule their country long after democracy had supposedly arrived.

Oshima and Others

All these qualities are evident in the work of Nagisa Oshima. Like his contemporary Truffaut, before getting into directing he wrote inflammatory film criticism. But, as a former student activist, he gave his articles a political slant alien to the French auteur critics. Oshima complained that Japanese society stifled the individual in the name of superficial harmony. He called for a personal cinema of the "active subject," in which the director expressed his deepest passions, anxieties, and obsessions. This view, a cliché in the West and one basis of postwar art cinema, was a breakthrough in Oshima's group- and tradition-dominated nation. He and his New Wave peers created Japan's postwar modernist cinema.

Oshima saw flickers of "active subjectivity" in the wave of late 1950s student demonstrations against renewing the US-Japan Security Treaty (known as "Ampo"). For the first time, the Japanese abandoned their time-honored role of obedient sufferers and saw themselves as able to change their fate. But Oshima quickly came to believe that the Ampo demonstrations led only to disillusionment. He traces this process in *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960), a scathing critique of the Communist party and the student left. Oshima intercuts student political activities from the 1950s with Ampo treaty demonstrations during 1960, rearranging their order to bring out parallels. He frames the two time schemes within a wedding ceremony that symbolizes a cynical surrender of political ideals. Shochiku shelved *Night and Fog in Japan* almost immediately after release. Oshima charged that the studio bowed to political pressures after the recent assassination of a Socialist leader. In protest he quit Shochiku, though several of his later films were produced by the company.

Throughout these films and others, Oshima pursued the question of how individual desires, however warped, reveal the rigidity of political authority. His harsh presentation of criminality, alienation, and eroticism remain disturbing today. Moreover, Oshima refused to cultivate an identifiable style. *Cruel Story of Youth* frames most scenes in medium shots and tight, decentered close-ups (**Color Plate 20.9**). *Night and Fog in Japan*, comprising only forty-five shots, relies on disorienting camera movements that whip across theatrically poised tableaux (**20.74**). *Violence at Noon* (1966), by contrast, uses naturalistic staging and style, around 1,500 shots. Each film's style, Oshima maintained, sprang from his feelings and attitudes of the moment.

Night and Fog in Japan

20.74 The quarreling leftists, framed in cramped, telephoto shots (*Night and Fog in Japan*).

Other directors created more conventional methods of stylization while still expressing a degree of social criticism. Hiroshi Teshigahara, associated with a surrealist group and the novelist Kobo Abe, found international success with *Woman in the Dunes* (1963). This tale of a man trapped in a gigantic sandpit with a mysterious woman was widely interpreted as an allegory of how an arid society could be overcome by a primal eroticism (**20.75**).

Two other Shochiku directors helped establish the New Wave. Masahiro Shinoda, an assistant to Ozu and an admirer of Mizoguchi, began his career with a film about student revolutionaries (*Dry Lake*, 1961), but he became best known for *Pale Flower* (1964), a crime story with some political critique. Shinoda went on to a long career as a mainstream director.

Another Shochiku talent, Yoshishige Yoshida (later known as Fuji Yoshida), was more idiosyncratic. Yoshida was promoted to director when Oshima's early work became successful. He too began with films about alienated youth turning to crime and drugs (*Good for Nothing*, 1960; *Escape from Japan*, 1964). Yoshida found popular success with *Akitsu Springs* (1962), an elegant, surprisingly conventional melodrama. It showed a devout woman who, after nursing a tubercular man back to health, finds herself rejected by him as he sinks into drunkenness. Her fate is given political resonance when she resolves to remake her life because of Japan's defeat, only to realize that postwar Japan obliterates love.

Woman in the Dunes

20.75 In *Woman in the Dunes*, the protagonist's attempt to dig his way out of a sandpit results in an avalanche.

Akitsu Springs was a project launched by the young star Mariko Okada. Soon she and Yoshida married and collaborated on studio projects before leaving Shochiku. Allied with the ATG, they embarked on independent productions with a feminist slant, such as *Lake of Women* (1966) and *The Affair* (1967).

Yoshida had usually not gone to Oshima's stylistic extremes, but he and Okada moved toward disjunctive, aggressive cinema with *Eros + Massacre* (1970). This film, originally almost five hours long, called for a passionate individualism that challenged a society that put the collective above all. In present-day Japan, Eiko, a sexually liberated young woman, is planning a film. Her story line, peppered with symbolic episodes, alternates with the life of Noe Ito, a 1910s feminist who becomes the mistress of an anarchist. The plot climaxes in three different versions of the murder of Ito's lover. Like many Japanese directors. Yoshida created decentered compositions in anamorphic widescreen, but here he pushed the tendency to extremes (**20.76**). *Eros + Massacre* was the first in a trilogy devoted to attacking Japanese social tradition (*Heroic Purgatory*, 1970; *Coup d'état*, 1973).

Close to Oshima's political perspective was the other major director to emerge from the New Wave, Shohei Imamura. Declaring his interest in "the lower part of the human body and the lower part of the social structure,"[14] Imamura sought to record Japan's forgotten regions, oppressed classes, and lustful impulses.

Eros + Massacre

20.76 In a radically off-center composition, the two time zones of *Eros + Massacre* intersect: Eiko in the present interviews Noe, who has mysteriously appeared in modern Tokyo.

Pigs and Battleships

20.77 *Pigs and Battleships*: the rebellious hero machine-guns a city street.

As a young director at Nikkatsu, Imamura became identified with the New Wave principally through his outrageously satiric *Pigs and Battleships* (1961). This story of a teenage thug whose gang raises pigs on black-market garbage is less stylized than Oshima's work of the period, but the political critique remains sharp. Presenting a society of petty racketeers, prostitutes, and mothers anxious to sell their daughters to GIs, Imamura equates the Japanese with the pigs feeding off refuse from US warships (**20.77**).

Like Oshima's men, Imamura's are typically driven by perverse antisocial desires, but he often regards his heroes more mockingly, as in *The Pornographers* (1966). The closing scene of *Pigs and Battleships* establishes the central Imamura character as the tough woman who fights for herself in a world dominated by men. *The Insect Woman* (1963) celebrates the pragmatism of three generations of postwar women who use prostitution and theft to win a measure of independence.

The Japanese New Wave brought recognition to many other filmmakers, both older directors such as Kaneto Shindo (notable for *The Island*, 1960) and younger talents such as Susumu Hani (*Bad Boys*, 1960; *She and He*, 1963). In addition, it created a climate of acceptance for experimentation. Koji Wakamatsu exploited the "pink" genre in gruesome, stylized films such as *Violated Women in White* (1967). Seijun Suzuki's Nikkatsu films, with their eccentric black humor and comic-book exaggerations, made him a cult figure with young audiences. Suzuki's outrageous compositions and color schemes turned standard lower-class melodramas and gangster sagas into delirious abstractions (**Color Plate 20.10**). Executives were distressed to find that the New Wave they had created led young audiences to expect outrageous formal innovations and attacks on authority in even routine studio products.

BRAZIL: CINEMA NÔVO

In the late 1950s, young cinéphiles in Rio de Janeiro began meeting at movie theaters and coffeehouses. Intrigued by both Hollywood classics and contemporary European art films, the young men wrote articles calling for a change in filmmaking. Offered places in the commercial industry, they launched a movement: *Cinema Nôvo*, the Portuguese term for "New Cinema."

In outline, Cinema Nôvo's history conforms to that of many young cinemas, particularly the Parisian Nouvelle Vague. Yet the differences are striking. Although Brazil

was in many ways a Westernized country, it remained firmly a part of what was then called the Third World. The cinéphiles, more politically militant than their counterparts in France, wanted their films to speak for the disenfranchised people of their country—the ethnic minorities, the peasants, and the landless laborers. Influenced by Italian Neorealism as well as the New Wave, the directors sought to record their nation's dilemmas and aspirations.

Cinema Nôvo films combined history and myth, personal obsessions and social problems, documentary realism and surrealism, and modernism and folklore. In mixing these ingredients, Cinema Nôvo recalled the Brazilian Modernist movement of the 1920s. It also chimed well with contemporary literary experiments and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. The young directors became a link between the Western new cinemas of the early 1960s and later Third World movements (see Chapter 23).

Barravento

20.78 *Barravento* is filmed with a handheld, zooming camera that dynamizes the *capoeira* fight/dance between Firmino and Aruan.

Government Support and New Directors

The most populous country in South America, Brazil had a topography stretching from drought-parched areas to tropical beaches. Its population included groups of African, Amerindian, European, and Far Eastern descent. Through a policy of "developmental nationalism," President João Goulart sought to unify and modernize the country. His plan for achieving industrial capitalism required that people recognize the country's backwardness. Although under fire from both right and left, Goulart supported many liberal cultural initiatives.

Cinema Nôvo was one such effort. Nelson Pereira dos Santos had already made his mark with the Neorealistic *Rio 40 Degrees* (1955) and was to serve as producer, editor, and inspiration to a group of younger men who came from film schools and film criticism. Like many New Wave directors before them, Brazil's filmmakers first tried their hands at short films. Ruy Guerra, Glauber Rocha, and Joaquim Pedro de Andrade made shorts while they were in their teens and early twenties. The anthology film *Slum Times Five* (1962) included episodes by Carlos Diegues, de Andrade, and others. Within a year, distinctive Cinema Nôvo features began to appear. Drawing on stylistic resources of other new cinemas—handheld camera, zoom shots, *plans-séquences*, underplayed dramatic moments, *temps morts*, ambiguous leaps between fantasy and reality—these directors turned out politically critical works.

Many films concentrated on life outside the cities. Glauber Rocha's *Barravento* ("The Turning Wind," 1962) is set in Bahia. Firmino returns from the city and tries to persuade the fishermen to free themselves from bondage to the owner of their nets. He also comes into conflict with Aruan, a local holy man (**20.78**). Eventually, Aruan becomes the new force of social consciousness.

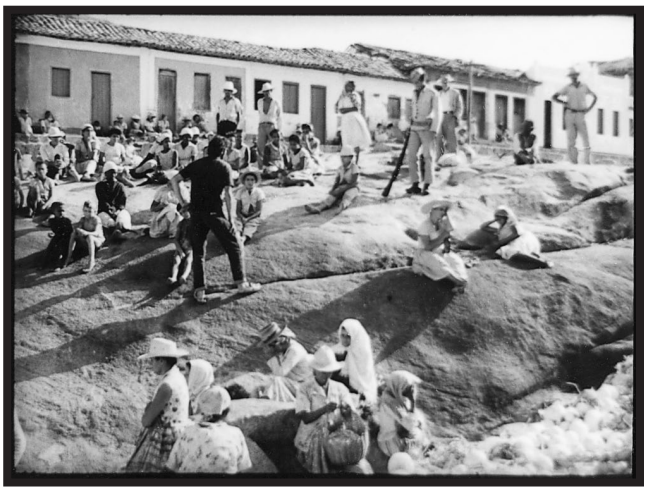
Rocha's next film, *Black God, White Devil* (1963), is more disjunctive. Set in the *sertão*, Brazil's harsh northwestern plain, it shows the oppression of the peasants by messianic religious leaders and vicious bandits. Between the two forces stand the credulous follower Manuel and the gunman Antonio das Mortes (**20.79**). The story is modeled on folk ballads, and songs comment ironically on the action. When Antonio kills the bandit Corisco, a choir sings "The power of the people is the strongest power," followed immediately by a lengthy take of Manuel and his wife fleeing across the wastelands. "Sad, ugly films ... screaming, desperate films where reason does not always

Black God, White Devil

20.79 Hired by a landowner and a priest to kill the religious agitator Sebastião, Antonio das Mortes takes aim at his real target in *Black God, White Devil*.

Vidas secas

20.80 The handheld camera is used to follow the family's endless search for a home in *Vidas secas.*


Os Fuzis

20.81 *Os Fuzis*: a truckload of onions is off-limits to the peasants, kept passive and frightened by the soldiers.

prevail"[15]—Rocha's description of Cinema Nôvo's style of this period fits his own work perfectly.

Nelson Pereira dos Santos dealt with peasant life more austerely in *Vidas secas* ("Barren Lives," 1963). Adapted from a classic novel, the film traces the attempts of Fabiano to find work during the 1940s drought. The dedramatized, almost wordless opening sequences introduce his family's trek across the arid sertão (**20.80**). In the course of the film, the family picks up scraps of work, but Fabiano is unjustly arrested and beaten. The film ends as it began, with quasi-documentary images of the family on the move.

Ruy Guerra made one of the earliest Cinema Nôvo films, *Os Cafajestes* ("The Loafers," 1962), but his fame arrived with *Os Fuzis* ("The Guns," 1963). Soldiers arrive in a famine-ridden town to guard a landlord's warehouse. As the starving peasants pray for miracles, the soldiers idle away their time drinking, firing their rifles, and chatting with the truck driver Gaucho. At the film's climax, Gaucho leads an aborted rebellion. Guerra uses striking wide-angle close-ups as well as long shots, which dramatize the alignment of political forces (**20.81**).

These films' stylistic differences reveal the influence of the European auteur theory. Guerra's crisp deep-focus imagery, the bleached dedramatization of Pereira dos Santos, and the flamboyant zooms and jerky cutting of Rocha mark each film as the product of a distinct sensibility. Most Cinema Nôvo directors followed Rocha in seeing the auteur theory as a vehicle of political critique. He considered cinematic authorship a reaction to the dominance of Hollywood; making idiosyncratic films was itself a revolutionary act.

The worldwide popularity of samba and bossa nova music and the building of the futuristic capital Brasília helped promote Cinema Nôvo as the expression of an energetic, modernizing country. More concretely, the films were oriented toward Goulart's ideology of consciousness-raising. They show peasant Brazilians oppressed by illiteracy, subsistence living, and military and clerical rule. The sertão films exemplify what Rocha called an "aesthetics of hunger," the revelation of how centuries of suffering could burst into cathartic rebellion. "Cinema Nôvo shows that the normal behavior of the starving is violence."[16]

Coups and the Cinema

President Goulart's reforms aroused fears in conservative circles. In 1964, the military seized power. For more than two decades afterward, Brazil was ruled by generals. Yet politically critical art flourished. Cinema Nôvo directors continued to work, and new filmmakers entered the industry.

Several Cinema Nôvo directors reflected on the failure of the Goulart government. Their films often focus on the tormented intellectual, cut off from both the bourgeoisie and the people. Gustavo Dahl's *The Brave Warrior* (1967) ends with an idealistic politician about to shoot himself in the mouth. Rocha gave this despair an extravagant treatment in *Terra em transe* ("Land in Anguish," 1967). In the country of Eldorado, a political myth is played out within the delirious consciousness of a revolutionary poet. *Terra em transe* is a surrealistic interrogation of the artist's political role, culminating in an Eisensteinian sequence: while police fire at the poet, churchmen and businessmen hold a raucous celebration.

Brazilian film culture was advancing. Universities were starting film courses, an annual festival was begun in Rio, and new magazines appeared. The collapse of the

Atlântida and Vera Cruz companies (see Brazil and Argentina p. 362) had seemed to end all prospects for a national film industry, but both Goulart and his military successors sponsored state initiatives aimed at rebuilding it. Legislation dictated tax exemptions, uniform ticket prices, and bigger screen quotas for the local product. The Grupo Executivo da Indústria Cinematográfica (GEICINE) was created in 1961 to coordinate film policy. In 1966, GEICINE was absorbed into the Instituto Nacional do Cinema (INC), which supported production through loans and prizes. Cinema Nôvo had a strong influence on the agency. The INC also assisted coproductions, which sharply increased national film output.

This expansion was aided by an abrupt turn of political events. As inflation increased in 1967 and 1968, so did strikes and protests. A second coup took place, installing right-wing military officers. They pushed through legislation curtailing civil liberties and dissolving political parties. Leftist forces launched urban guerrilla war, and, between 1969 and 1973, Brazil was a battleground between terrorists and the military regime.

As usual, Rocha was quick to comment on contemporary conditions. *O Dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro* ("The Evil Dragon versus the Holy Saint," aka *Antonio das Mortes*, 1969) revisits the subject of *Black God, White Devil*, but now the mystic and the bandit are seen as affirmative forces and the cold-blooded killer Antonio das Mortes symbolizes the new regime. No longer are the peasants benighted victims; revolution arises out of folk rituals, such as theater and festival. Accordingly, Rocha's technique is more stylized. The people become the audience as the antagonists play out their conflicts in a bare, semitheatrical arena (**20.82**).

As part of the military government's plan to centralize cultural activities, film policy was recast. Censorship became much tighter. In 1969, an agency was created to control filmmaking. Empresa Brasileira de Filmes (Embrafilme) was charged with organizing film export and financing production, much as France's CNC did. Through low-interest loans to successful firms, Embrafilme helped boost production to a postwar high of ninety-one films in 1971. The agency would eventually absorb the INC and fuel Brazil's export success in the 1980s.

Antonio das Mortes

20.82 *Antonio das Mortes*: in the town square, Antonio and the bandit reenact the battle that climaxed *Black God, White Devil*.

Tropicalism and Cannibalism

Although production was flourishing, political repression drove many artists out of the country. The Cinema Nôvo directors who stayed altered their filmmaking in distinctive ways. One trend, which encompassed music and theater as well, was called "tropicalism." This was a comic and grotesque celebration of indigenous popular culture. Instead of Cinema Nôvo's didactic insistence on the backwardness of rural life, tropicalism treated folk culture as brimming with vitality and wisdom. Joaquim Pedro de Andrade's *Macunaíma* (1970), for example, is an exuberant comic epic blending Brazilian myths with contemporary satire. Filmed in brilliant color, full of surreal gags and sudden switches of tone, *Macunaíma* became the first Cinema Nôvo film to win large audiences.

Throughout *Macunaíma* the lazy, deluded hero is confronted with cannibalism as a way of avenging oneself on enemies. This motif, an echo of 1920s literary movements, became another element of Cinema Nôvo work of the period. The metaphor of cannibalism showed authentic Brazilian culture ravenously incorporating colonial influences. In *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (1972), Pereira dos Santos's Direct Cinema technique and voice-over narration show a French colonialist captured by a tribe of Tupinamba. He is allowed to live among them before he is executed and eaten. The film dwells satirically on the cultural and economic dynamics of imperialism, as when the greedy colonist and the white trader open a grave in their search for treasure (**Color Plate 20.11**).

Both tropicalism and cannibalism were in the tradition of Brazil's "festive left," which traditionally paid homage to popular culture. Rocha saw in these qualities a way for filmmakers to connect with myth and to guide people toward "anarchic liberation."[17] These trends could win a wider audience than did the astringent realism or flamboyant experiments of earlier Cinema Nôvo efforts. The

competition of television serials and erotic comedies (the *pornochanchada*) also pushed filmmakers toward more accessible, spectacle-centered works.

As Cinema Nôvo became a prestige cinema, winning financial support from INC and Embrafilme, a more extreme avant-garde arose to challenge it. Colleges, ciné-clubs, and archives began to screen samples from the *udigrudi*, or "underground." Rogério Sganzerla *Red Light Bandit* (1968), Andrea Tonacci's *Bla Bla Bla* (1968), and Julio Bressane *Killed the Family and Went to the Movies* (1969) were all-out assaults on good taste. Gruesome scenes of murder and vomiting were recorded in deliberately sloppy technique. This self-proclaimed "aesthetics of garbage" savagely mocked the aesthetics of hunger, and many scenes parodied films by Rocha, Guerra, and their peers. Cinema Nôvo, its edge blunted by exile or cooperation with the state-controlled film industry, was no longer a disruptive force.

Diegues and Guerra continued to make politically critical films in exile. Rocha became even more militant. He denounced Cinema Nôvo's formative influences—Neorealism and the Nouvelle Vague—declaring that Third World revolution would overturn both Hollywood and the tradition of European authorship represented by Jean-Luc Godard, Roberto Rossellini, and Sergei Eisenstein. In this, he echoed the manifestos of "imperfect cinema" and "Third Cinema" elsewhere in the hemisphere.

Years before, Rocha and his colleagues had been, as Diegues put it, "making political films when the [French] New Wave was still talking about unrequited love."[18] The young Rio cinéphiles had helped launch a tradition of political modernism that swept through the world during the next decade, as we shall see in Chapter 23.

Cinematic modernism, revived in the decade after World War II, became even more prominent between 1958 and 1967. While established directors consolidated the trend, young auteurs experimented with novel techniques and applied them to new subjects. Now art-cinema films were likely to be fragmentary and nonlinear in their time and space, provocative and puzzling in their storytelling, ambiguous in their thematic implications.

Moreover, many young cinemas were explicitly, and critically, political. In this respect, the Nouvelle Vague lagged behind. Outside France, many filmmakers assaulted myths about national history, cast a severe eye on contemporary social conditions, celebrated rebellions against authority, and dissected the mechanisms of repression. Older directors such as Resnais and Jancsó and youthful talents such as Godard, Pasolini, Straub, Kluge, Chytilová, Makavejev, Oshima, and Rocha were laying the groundwork for a "political modernism." This trend would become central to international cinema in the decade after 1968.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Peter Graham, ed., *The New Wave* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 92.
2. Quoted in Jean-Luc Douin, *Godard* (Paris: Rivages, 1989), p. 26.
3. Claude Chabrol, *Et Pourtant je tourne ...* (Paris: Laffont, 1976), p. 181.
4. Quoted in Oswald Stack, *Pasolini on Pasolini* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p. 49.
5. Ibid., p. 109.
6. Quoted in Noël Simsolo, *Conversations avec Sergio Leone* (Paris: Stock, 1987), p. 93.
7. Quoted in "Young German Film," *Film Comment* 6, 1 (spring 1970): 44.
8. Eckhardt Schmid, quoted in "... Preferably Naked Girls," in Eric Rentchsler, ed., *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988), p. 42.
9. Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), p. 30.
10. Quoted in Peter Hames, *The Czechoslovak New Wave* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 187.
11. Quoted in Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 72.
12. Quoted in Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, "Le Cinéma hongrois de 1963 à 1980," in Jean-Loup Passek, ed., *Le Cinéma hongrois* (Paris: Pompidou Center, 1979), p. 48.
13. Quoted in Graham Petrie, *History Must Answer to Man* (Budapest: Corvina, 1978), p. 107.
14. Quoted in Audie Bock, *Japanese Film Directors* (Tokyo: Kondansha, 1978), p. 293.
15. Quoted in Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, eds. *Brazilian Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 70.
16. Ibid.
17. Quoted in Sylvia Pierre, *Glauber Rocha* (Paris: Cahier du Cinéma, 1987), p. 139.
18. Quoted in Johnson and Stam, *Brazilian Cinema*, p. 33.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On Hitchcock's influence on Truffaut: "TRUFFAUT/HITCHCOCK, HITCHCOCK/TRUFFAUT, and the Big Reveal"

CHAPTER 21

The Silent World

DOCUMENTARY AND EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA IN THE POSTWAR ERA, 1945–MID-1960s

Meshes of the Afternoon

In the two decades after World War II, documentary and avant-garde filmmaking underwent enormous changes. New technologies and institutions altered the basis of independent filmmaking. These developments were often connected to the rise of the commercial art cinema and the emergence of new waves.

Both documentarists and avant-gardists renewed the idea of a personal cinema. In the 1930s, the Spanish civil war, Stalin's rigged trials of his former associates in Moscow, and the rise of Fascism and militarism had led to genocide and a world war. Now many artists turned from political commitment (see Chapter 14) to a conception of individual expression. This impulse, most notable in the rise of Abstract Expressionist painting in the United States and Europe, was also visible in experimental film. Even the postwar documentary film became more of a vehicle for the filmmaker's beliefs and feelings than had been usual before.

There was also a new interest in capturing unpredictable events on film. Before 1950, most documentary cinema had primarily sought to control chance. The filmmaker might record something casual or accidental, but that would be smoothly absorbed into a larger structure of meaning thanks to editing and voice-over commentary. Most major documentarists, from Dziga Vertov and Robert Flaherty to Pare Lorentz and Humphrey Jennings, had resorted to more strongly controlling techniques, such as staging scenes for the camera. But Neorealism, particularly in Cesare Zavattini's pronouncements, had seen truth in the uncontrolled event. In the 1950s, lightweight cameras and sound equipment allowed documentarists to eliminate the artifice of voice-over commentary and preplanned structure, creating a cinema centered on the spontaneous moment.

At the same time, avant-gardists revived Dada and Surrealist conceptions of the revelatory accident. John Cage, for example, composed musical

The Silent World

In the Street

21.1, *left* *The Silent World*: this view toward the ocean's surface suggests the new freedom given divers by Cousteau's invention, the aqualung.

21.2, *right* Flirtation on the stoop (*In the Street*, Helen Levitt, Janice Loeb, and James Agee).

pieces that incorporated chance and environmental sounds. His *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (1951) consisted of twelve radios tuned to different stations according to chance. Postwar experimental filmmakers, as well as workers in other arts, often adapted Cagean ideas by incorporating accidents as part of self-expression. Lucky aberrations of light or color could become part of a larger form. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the sort of objectivity courted by documentarists entered the avant-garde as well. In the work of the Fluxus group and of Andy Warhol, the artist no longer expressed personal feelings but rather invited the spectator to scrutinize a process or witness an improvised scene. Because this approach risked boring the audience, these avant-gardists, like their documentary counterparts, asked audiences to accept a cinema that refused to arouse and fulfill the narrative appetites to which Hollywood catered.

TOWARD THE PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY

At the end of the war, most documentary filmmaking remained in the hands of large institutions. Pathé, news organizations, and the Hollywood studios issued newsreels and informational films for theatrical exhibition. Government agencies in many countries supported documentary units, which produced informational and propaganda films for schools and civic organizations. Corporations sponsored films that promoted products, as when Shell Oil backed Flaherty's lyrical *Louisiana Story* (1948).

After the early 1950s, fewer documentaries appeared on theater programs. Television news displaced weekly newsreels, and studios ceased to make them. Yet television also provided a new market. For example, before the war feature-length documentaries had been rare, but by the early 1960s they became more common, aimed at television broadcast or occasional theatrical exhibition.

In the postwar era, most of the older documentarists slackened their pace. Vertov supervised a newsreel series until his death in 1954. After *Louisiana Story*, Flaherty was unable to complete a film, though before his death in 1951 he produced several shorts. John Grierson left the National Film Board (NFB) of Canada in 1945 but then presided over several efforts to make documentary-style fiction films and documentary television series. Only Joris Ivens remained active as a director, teaching and making films in Poland, China, Cuba, and other nations aligned with the USSR.

Innovative Trends

A new generation of documentarists appeared. Although some had begun their careers during the war, the freer circulation of films in peacetime helped their work become known internationally. Most of these individuals worked within well-tried genres, but others innovated more significantly.

In the film of nature and exploration, for example, the Swede Arne Sücksdorff used telephoto lenses and hidden cameras to bring the viewer into the midst of wildlife in *The Great Adventure* (1954). Oceanographer Jacques Cousteau perfected undersea photography in a series of films exploring marine life (*The Silent World*, 1956; **21.1**; *World without Sun*, 1964).

The film of social observation also attracted idiosyncratic talents. The tabloid photographer Weegee toured the seamy side of city life in *Weegee's New York* (1950). Less sensationalistic was *In the Street* (1952), an unpolished evocation of the world of the New York poor (**21.2**). Perhaps the most important observational film of the period was Georges Rouquier's *Farrebique* (1946), a chronicle of the struggles of a French peasant family during 1944 and 1945. Much of the film was staged and drew on conventions of fictional cinema (**21.3**, **21.4**). Yet Rouquier minimizes voice-over commentary in order to savor the regional dialect, and he evokes the routines and travails of the Farrebique farm.

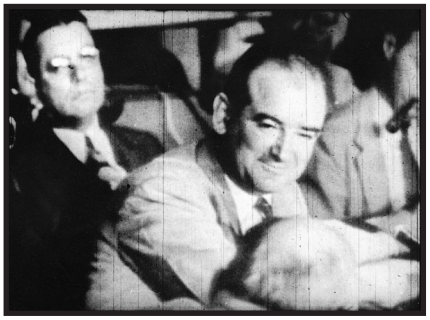
The film of reportage, though largely replaced by television coverage, still held a place, especially when it could

21.3, 21.4 *Farrebique*: During labor, Berthe clutches the sheet, and Rouquier dissolves to a flower opening as a shriek is heard and her baby is born.

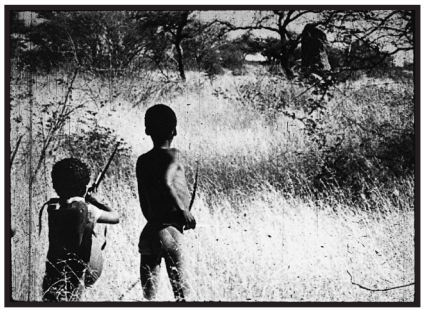
21.5 Haanstra pokes fun at the gestures of salesmen in a Dutch auto show (*Alleman*).

21.6 Labor-camp inmates are fed in *Le Retour*.

21.7 The compilation film as an investigation of the past: the Spanish civil war in *To Die in Madrid*.



21.8 *Point of Order*: after accusing attorney Joseph Welch's associate of espousing Communism, Senator Joseph McCarthy tries to shrug off Welch's rebuke ("Until this moment, Senator, I never truly gauged your cruelty or your recklessness").



21.9 Boys of the Kalihari desert practice archery (*The Hunters*).

present an event in fresh ways. Kon Ichikawa's *Tokyo Olympiad* (1965), for example, did not try to duplicate television coverage of the 1964 Olympics but instead used more than 150 cameramen and a virtuoso barrage of techniques to capture the human toil of the games. Similarly, the city symphony (see Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony p. 157) continued in such works as Frank Stauffacher's *Sausalito* (1948), Francis Thompson's *N.Y., N.Y.* (1957), and Bert Haanstra's *Alleman* (*Everyman*, 1960; **21.5**).

The compilation documentary had become a staple of the wartime film diet and retained its importance. One of the most powerful was Henri Cartier-Bresson's *Le Retour* (1946), using US military footage of the liberation of the Nazi POW camps and the prisoners' return to their homes (**21.6**). The feature-length compilation film flourished in the hands of a new generation of filmmakers. Frédéric Rossif's *To Die in Madrid* (1962; **21.7**) marked the mainstream success of a politically critical use of the genre. With *Point of Order* (1964), a recapitulation of the US Senate's 1954 investigation of charges against Senator Joseph McCarthy, Emile De Antonio established himself as one of the most skillful exponents of the compilation genre (**21.8**).

Ethnographic cinema was rejuvenated as anthropologists employed more professional standards. Flaherty's search for drama and the clash of humans and nature gave way to an attempt to record remote cultures more neutrally and accurately. During the 1950s, the American John Marshall filmed customs of the Bushmen of the Kalihari desert, and anthropologist Robert Gardner helped him assemble the footage into *The Hunters* (1956). Following four men hunting a giraffe, the film adheres to the Flaherty tradition, but it marked an important stage in the sober recording of folkways (**21.9**). Gardner went on to make the most

famous American anthropological film, *Dead Birds* (1963), in which he recorded, with a minimum of interference, the Dani people of Indonesia as they fought a war.

The National Film Board and Free Cinema

Most innovative documentarists of the postwar era worked on an artisanal basis or on a film-by-film arrangement with a funding group. The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) had been formed in 1939 by John Grierson (see Great Britain p. 271), and it concentrated on short animated and documentary films. Despite its government funding, the board gave innovative creators a bureaucratic structure to help them express individual viewpoints. A typical NFB documentary is *City of Gold* (1957, Colin Low and Wolf Koenig). Ostensibly a historical view of the gold rush in Dawson City, it meditated on the contrasts between the town as it was in the 1890s and the modern town, where the narrator had been raised (**21.10**). Of those who stayed in the town despite finding no gold, he concludes, "These men found their El Dorado."

The trend toward individual innovation was most evident in the work of several filmmakers who found ways to express their personal attitudes via the documentary. This trend arose simultaneously with *Cahiers du cinéma*'s auteur policy, which emphasized the director's personal vision in fictional and commercial films. Not surprisingly, many of the directors of *personal documentaries* moved into mainstream fiction production.

In Great Britain, the personal documentary came to prominence in a short-lived movement called Free Cinema. Karel Reisz, Lindsay Anderson, and other members of the group had been associated with the film magazines *Sequence* and *Sight and Sound*. In these forums, they had expressed hostility to both commercial filmmaking and the current state of British documentary. They called for a "free" cinema that would express the director's commitment to deep personal views. Thanks to the British Film Institute's Experimental Film Fund and to occasional corporate sponsorship, several of the Free Cinema filmmakers were able to make short documentaries before becoming the core filmmakers of the British Kitchen Sink cinema (see Chapter 20).

Most of the films expressed the directors' attitudes toward contemporary, urbanizing Britain. Popular culture formed a central subject. Anderson's *O Dreamland* (1953) reflected on the public's need for a cheap night out, while Tony Richardson's *Momma Don't Allow* (1956) and Reisz's *We Are the Lambeth Boys* (1958) rendered teenagers' lifestyles with considerable affection (**21.11**). More traditional subjects were treated with a new restraint. Anderson's film about Covent Garden's markets, *Every Day Except Christmas* (1957), emphasized work routines and earthy language, while his *Thursday's Children* (1954) offered an optimistic view of a school for deaf children by capturing the pupils' spontaneous cheerfulness (**21.12**).

France: The Auteurs' Documentaries

In France as well, personal expression emerged in the documentary. The government funded films about art and culture, both subjects that traditionally allowed filmmakers to inject their own viewpoints. By 1953, the government was actively encouraging short quasi-experimental films. In addition, *Cahiers du cinéma*, like *Sequence*, considered artistic cinema to depend on directorial expression (following the auteur idea; see Chapter 19). Pierre Braunberger, Anatole Dauman, Paul Legros, and other producers gave directors a free hand in the making of poetic or essayistic documentaries.

Alain Resnais achieved his reputation as a documentarist with a series of films on art. *Van Gogh* (1948), which won a prize at Venice and an Academy Award, set forth a new method of portraying a painter's work. Instead of

City of Gold

21.10 In *City of Gold*, old-timers from gold-rush days gossip, with a modern Coca-Cola ad in the background.

We Are the Lambeth Boys

21.11 Reisz's teenagers drive back through Whitehall, the framing juxtaposing their youthful rowdiness with a postcard London cityscape (*We Are the Lambeth Boys*).

Thursday's Children

21.12 A deaf child learns about speaking by touching her teacher's jaw in *Thursday's Children*.

considering each painting as a whole and in chronological order, Resnais explored Van Gogh's private world across his entire career. He panned over a canvas to show the rhythm of a line and intercut details from different paintings without supplying an orienting long shot. For *Guernica* (1951), Resnais intercut Picasso's sketches and notes with photographs and headlines from the Spanish civil war. More controversial was *Les Statues meurent aussi* ("Statues Also Die," 1953), which Resnais codirected with his friend Chris Marker. This study of African art in western museums implies that the colonizers destroyed the cultures of the lands they invaded. The film was banned.

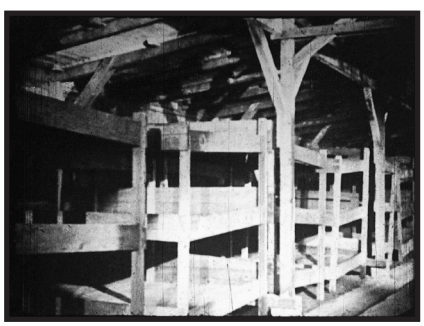
Resnais's two most honored documentaries explore the nature of historical memory. *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1957) gives a clipped, unsensationalized image of the Nazi concentration camps akin to Resnais's treatment of the atomic bomb in *Hiroshima mon amour* (see New Cinema: The Left Bank p. 394). He cuts between a deserted prison seen today—in a bright countryside, filmed in full color—and newsreel footage of the camps in operation. Instead of playing up the horror, *Night and Fog* dwells on the impossibility of ever truly capturing the past. As the camera probes the ruins, the commentator asks, "How to discover what remains of the reality of these camps?" (**21.13**). At the end, the commentary suggests that the impulses that created the holocaust are far from extinguished today.

More optimistic is *Toute la mémoire du monde* ("The World's Entire Memory," 1957), a study of the French national library. Resnais's camera glides through the gloomy storerooms and stacks, creating a series of metaphors: the library as labyrinth, as prison (**21.14**), and as gigantic brain. The film's somber lyricism celebrates the desire to know the truth and to remember the past.

Resnais's work ran parallel to that of Georges Franju. Both men were born in 1912, made their first significant film in 1948, and moved to fiction features during the late 1950s New Wave period (see New Cinema: The Left Bank). Of Franju's numerous documentaries, the most influential were *Le Sang des bêtes* (*Blood of the Beasts*, 1948) and *Hôtel des invalides* (1951). In these films, Franju set out to disturb his audiences in a way recalling the Surrealists and Luis Buñuel's *Las Hurdes.*

Le Sang des bêtes records a day in a slaughterhouse. It emphasizes the casual professionalism of the butchers and the violence necessary to put meat on plates. But Franju also juxtaposes images of suffering animals with the homes and churches surrounding the slaughterhouse. Accidental details of this quiet neighborhood take on bizarre aspects (**21.15**). In this context, a shot of calves' heads stacked like cabbages exudes the disturbing poetry sought by Buñuel and Salvador Dalí.

Hôtel des invalides does much the same for a national war memorial. In this monument to war's glory, the film discloses images of suffering (**21.16**). Franju dwells on the ominous overtones of military memorabilia, as when a general's bust resembles a shattered skull. Franju later brought this vision of the disquieting aspects of everyday life to fiction features.


Night and Fog

Toute la mémoire du monde

21.13, *left* "No description, no image can restore their true dimension: endless, uninterrupted fear": the barracks in *Night and Fog.*

21.14, *right* A book shut into its cell in *Toute la mémoire du monde.*

Le Sang des bêtes

Hôtel des invalides

21.15, *left* A junkyard yields surrealist icons in *Le Sang des bêtes.*

21.16, *right* The juxtaposition of the military past and its consequences in *Hôtel des invalides.*

The films of Chris Marker, more cerebral and freely structured than those of Resnais and Franju, epitomize the use of documentary for personal expression. A professional photographer and a world traveler, Marker produced a series of essayistic documentaries expressing complex opinions and ironic wit.

Marker explores two documentary modes. One is the travelogue, which he treats as a pretext for a free-ranging reflection on western ideas of exotic cultures. *Dimanche à Pekin* (*Sunday in Peking*, 1956) and *Lettre de Sibérie* (*Letter from Siberia*, 1958) take banal, almost tourist-movie images and, through a dense poetic commentary, meditate on the storybook clichés representing non-European cultures. *Letter from Siberia* is both a parody of the travelogue and a highly formalized reflection on documentary film's struggle to capture the truth of a culture. In the film's most famous sequence, Marker demonstrates the power of voice-over commentary by running the same series of shots three times, each time changing the narration to create different meanings.

Marker also made political documentaries. In *Cuba Sí!* (1961), he appraises Castro's revolution in the face of US attacks. *Le Joli mai* (1963) brought a political critique to bear on the new trend of Direct Cinema. But Marker's highly personal stance often confounds orthodox leftist positions. His reflections on Israel (*Description of a Struggle*, 1961) mix praise, criticism, humor, and a tourist's fascination (**21.17**).

Jean Rouch and Ethnographic Documentary

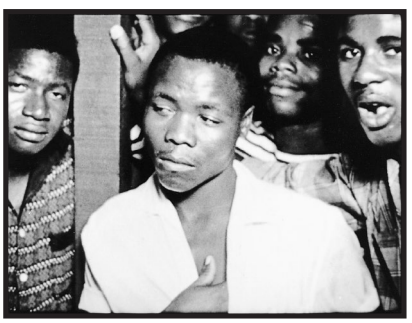
While Resnais, Franju, and Marker were defining varieties of the personal documentary, another French filmmaker was bringing this attitude to the ethnographic film. In 1946, the young anthropologist Jean Rouch took a 16 mm camera on his first field trip to Niger, and on a later visit he took along a portable tape recorder. The short ethnographic documentaries he made led to his being named head of the newly created International Commission of Sociological and Ethnographic Film.

Rouch's influence began to be felt with his controversial *Les Maîtres fous* ("The Mad Masters," 1957). While in Ghana in 1955, he was asked by priests of the Hauka cult to film their ceremonies of possession. Rouch recorded cult members in a trance, pacing frenziedly, foaming at the mouth, and eventually eating a dog. What differentiates this film from sensationalized portraits of "primitive" Africa is the fact that the participants play the roles of the colonialists who rule them. By day the cultists are dockers and cattle herders, but, at the ritual, one becomes an army captain, another the governor, a third an elegant French lady (**21.18**). Rouch's doctoral thesis argued that in parodying their rulers, the Hauka release their feelings of imperialist oppression. "This violent play," the film's commentary warns, "is only the reflection of our civilization."

Les Maîtres fous caused a scandal. Many African countries banned it, and both Europeans and Africans urged Rouch to destroy it. Nonetheless, it won a prize at the Venice Film Festival and reinforced Rouch's desire to document the effects of colonialism in the Third World. His next film, *Moi un noir (Treichville)* ("Me, a Black Man [Treichville]," 1959), shows people in the Ivory Coast consciously imitating western life. Surrounded by the trappings of European culture, menial laborers take new names: Edward G. Robinson, Tarzan, Dorothy Lamour. The handheld camera follows them drinking, searching for jobs, and drifting through dance halls. Rouch also displays their aspirations, notably the dream of Robinson to become a prizefighter. *Moi un noir* becomes an intriguing mixture of fiction and documentary (**21.19**). Rouch showed the edited film to Robinson, whose comments during the screening were added to the sound track.

21.17 "But first, look at her—to the point where she becomes an enigma, as words endlessly repeated become unrecognizable": the closing of Marker's *Description of a Struggle.*

21.18 *Les Maîtres fous*: the celebrants stalk up and down in a frenzy. At this point in his career, Rouch used a long lens, which allowed him to stay at a distance from the action, an approach he would later abandon.



21.19 In *Moi un noir*, Edward G. Robinson is "in" the story action and so ignores Rouch's camera, while Eddie Constantine and the others frankly acknowledge it.

Ethnographic film, in Rouch's eyes, was of paramount importance for westerners because it showed the differences among societies, preventing Europeans from "trying to transform [other cultures] into images of ourselves."[1] Rouch was criticized for delineating the psychological effects of colonialism without presenting Africans who seek to change their lives through social action. But he saw his project in less political terms. He sought to give ethnographic film a human dimension, not only by showing westerners other cultures, but also by using the filmmaking act to create a bond between the researcher and the subject. Having brought Robinson into the movies, he made him his assistant. (Years later, under his given name, Oumarou Ganda, Rouch's protagonist became one of Nigeria's most important filmmakers.) Rouch made films, he claimed, primarily for the people he filmed and for himself, to preserve his experiences in the culture. His involvement with his subjects, and his willingness to break technical rules if they interfered with human immediacy, also led him toward another documentary trend, Direct Cinema.

DIRECT CINEMA

Between 1958 and 1963, documentary filmmaking was transformed. Documentarists began to utilize lighter and more mobile equipment, to work in smaller crews, and to reject traditional conceptions of script and structure. The new documentary sought to study individuals, to reveal the moment-by-moment development of a situation, to search for instants of drama or psychological revelation. Instead of staged scenes with voice-over narration, the new documentary would permit people to speak for themselves.

Called *candid cinema*, *uncontrolled cinema*, *observational cinema*, and *cinéma vérité* ("cinema truth"), this trend was most generally known as Direct Cinema. The name suggests that the new technologies recorded events with an unprecedented immediacy and that the filmmaker avoided the obvious manipulation—restaging, narrational commentary—of earlier documentarists.

Several factors influenced the new approach. Most generally, Italian Neorealism had intensified documentarists' urge to capture everyday life. Technological innovations, such as the growth of 16 mm production and the emergence of sound-on-tape, provided a new flexibility (see New Technology for the New Documentary box). Moreover, television needed motion pictures to fill airtime, and network news organizations sought a fresh approach to audiovisual journalism. In the United States, Canada, and France, documentarists forged distinct versions of Direct Cinema.

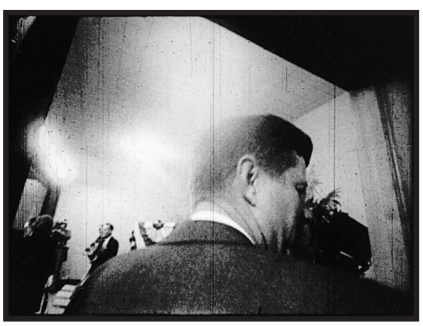
The United States: Drew and Associates

In the United States, Direct Cinema emerged under the auspices of the photojournalist Robert Drew. Drew wanted to bring to television reporting the dramatic realism of *Life* magazine's candid photography. In 1954, he met Richard Leacock, who had worked on *Native Land* (see The United States p. 266) and had shot Flaherty's *Louisiana Story*. With the backing of Time, Inc., Drew hired Leacock, Donn Pennebaker, David and Albert Maysles, and several other filmmakers.

Drew produced a series of short films aimed at television broadcast, including the ground-breaking *Primary* (1960), a report on the Wisconsin primary election between John Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey. Leacock, Pennebaker, the Maysleses, and Terence Macartney-Filgate all worked as cinematographers. Although the film contained some lip-sync sound, its visual authenticity attracted more attention. The camera followed the politicians working the streets, riding from town to town, and nervously relaxing in hotel rooms (**21.20–21.22**).

Primary

21.20 The most famous shot in *Primary*: Albert Maysles's camera, held above his head, follows Kennedy through a crowd of supporters . . .


Primary

21.21 . . . into a corridor (note the distortions created by the wide-angle lens) . . . (*Primary*)

Primary

21.22 . . . and onto the stage, where another Drew cameraman is waiting to capture a reverse angle (*Primary*).

NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR THE NEW DOCUMENTARY

Eastman Kodak introduced the 16 mm gauge in 1923, chiefly for home movies and educational films. In the 1930s, some documentarists and experimental filmmakers began using the gauge (see Great Britain p. 268). During World War II, 16 mm came into wider use. It was well suited for combat filming, and 16 mm prints of educational and propaganda films circulated among military stations and on the home front. The US government donated 16 mm projectors to schools and civic organizations so they could screen government releases. After the war, documentary and experimental filmmakers around the world eagerly took up the format.

Television arrived in Europe and North America in the early 1950s. In those pre-videotape days, the cheapness and flexibility of 16 mm made it the standard gauge for reportage, commercials, and TV films. Manufacturers began to produce professional 16 mm cameras. These usually had zoom lenses and reflex viewfinders, which allowed the filmmaker to sight directly through the lens during filming. In 1952, the Arriflex 16 set a new standard for ease of operation and became the model for most professional 16 mm. Eastman and other companies developed a range of 16 mm film stocks, often "fast" emulsions that permitted filming in relatively low light.

Two further developments led to Direct Cinema. Before the mid-1950s, nearly all professional 16 mm cameras were so heavy that steady shots could be obtained only if the camera was anchored to a tripod. Yet attaching a standard camera to a tripod was time-consuming; by the time the camera was set up, the action had usually passed. The need to use a tripod encouraged documentarists to restage events. In addition, the bulky camera made subjects aware of the act of filming. Only filmmakers using amateur equipment, such as Rouch in his ethnographic shorts, could easily shoot handheld.

Around 1958, several manufacturers introduced lighter 16 mm professional cameras. The Auricon Cinevoice and the Eclair Cameflex each weighed around sixty pounds, light enough to be anchored on a shoulder brace. An improved model of the Arriflex 16 weighed just twenty-two pounds. The prototype KMT Coutant-Mathot Eclair, made available to Rouch for *Chronique d'un été* (1961), weighed less than twenty pounds. Holding such a camera, the filmmaker could pan quickly, walk with the subject, ride in a car, and follow the situation wherever it led.

Just as important were improvements in sound recording. Documentaries had relied on voice-over narration partly because filmmakers could not easily record lip-synchronized sound outside the studio. It was far less trouble to add music, background noise, and commentary to a string of images than to let the participants speak for themselves. Only in highly prepared circumstances—a politician giving a speech before a microphone, a person interviewed in a studio—was it possible to record lip-sync sound during filming. Even the relatively spontaneous Free Cinema films suffered from the limitations of sound recording.

During the early 1950s, both fiction and documentary filmmakers began to replace optical sound-on-film recording with magnetic sound, recorded on tape. Documentarists consequently tried to capture sound on-site with a portable tape recorder. The Swiss company Nagra introduced a tape recorder for filmmaking in 1953 and made an improved version available four years later.

The problem now was synchronizing the picture track with sound recorded on the spot. Around 1958, engineers devised the Pilotone system, which sent an electric pulse from the camera to the recorder and registered on one track of the tape. In playback, the pulse automatically adjusted the speed of the tape to correspond to the picture. Most early versions of the Pilotone system used a cable to connect the camera to the recorder. This umbilical cord hampered the freedom of movement that Direct Cinema sought, so engineers created radio-transmission devices. The wireless system, first used extensively in the United States, became standard internationally by the mid-1960s.

Although synchronization and camera noise still posed problems, by 1958 portable 16 mm cameras and tape recorders, along with smaller microphones and faster film stocks, had triggered a revolution in filmmaking practice.

Primary's drama was heightened by crosscutting between the two candidates and by voice-over news reports, which largely replaced explanatory commentary.

Shortly afterward, ABC television commissioned Drew and Leacock to make several films, notably *Yanki, No!* (1960), an examination of anti-US feelings in Latin America, and *The Children Were Watching* (1960), a study of school integration. Between 1961 and 1963, Drew Associates made twelve more films, including *Eddie* (1961), *Jane* (1962), and *The Chair* (1962). Ten of these became

known as the "Living Camera" series. By now, they fully exploited direct sound.

Drew, who exercised editorial control over most of the films made by the company, saw documentary as a way of telling dramatic stories. "In each of the stories there is a time when man comes against moments of tension, and pressure, and revelation, and decision. It's these moments that interest us most."[2] For Drew, Direct Cinema gripped audiences through what came to be called its *crisis structure*. Most Drew-unit films center on a high-stakes situation to be resolved in a few days or hours. The film arouses the viewer's emotion by showing conflict, suspense, and a decisive outcome. *Primary* exploits the crisis structure, as does *The Chair*, which shows lawyers' struggles to save a rehabilitated convict from execution. The crisis puts the participants under stress and reveals their personalities. Often, as in *Eddie* or *Jane*, the protagonist fails to achieve the goal, and the film ends with a scrutiny of his or her emotional reaction.

Drew used multiple crews on most films, tracing out several lines of action and intercutting between different forces racing the clock. He encouraged each cameraman to efface himself, to accustom the subjects to his presence, and to respond intuitively to the developing drama. The approach was that of feature journalism, in which the reporter balances respect for the facts with subjective judgments about selection and emphasis.

Soon Drew's filmmakers left the unit to form their own companies. The Maysles brothers departed to make *Showman* (1962), a study of film producer Joseph E. Levine, and *What's Happening! The Beatles in New York* (1964). Far more episodic than the Drew films, the Maysleses' projects avoided the crisis structure and offered casual, sketchy portraits of show-business celebrities. *What's Happening!*, the first Direct Cinema film in the United States to omit voice-over narration entirely, was simply a diary of the Beatles' tour, rousing one professional television producer to complain, "As most documentary filmmakers understand the film, it was hardly a film at all."[3]

Donn Pennebaker and Richard Leacock also left Drew Associates, forming their own firm. Pennebaker made a study of handicapped twins (*Elizabeth and Mary*, 1965) and specialized in films documenting American popular music (*Don't Look Back*, 1966; *Monterey Pop*, 1968; *Keep on Rockin'*, 1970). Leacock went on to make *Happy Mother's Day* (1963), showing how the birth of quintuplets disrupts a small town; *A Stravinsky Portrait* (1964); and *Ku Klux Klan—The Invisible Empire* (1965).

Leacock, the most proselytizing of US Direct Cinema filmmakers, advocated what he called "uncontrolled cinema." He believed that a self-effacing crew could become so integrated into a situation that people would forget they were being filmed. The purpose, Leacock claimed, is "to find out some important aspect of our society, by *watching how things really happen* as opposed to the social image that people hold about the way things are *supposed* to happen."[4] Leacock's concern for Direct Cinema's power to reveal social institutions through face-to-face interactions inspired a generation of filmmakers.

Direct Cinema in Bilingual Canada

Television was also a major impetus for the emergence of Direct Cinema in Canada. The creation of national broadcasting in 1953 encouraged documentarists at the National Film Board (NFB) of Canada to shoot in 16 mm and rapidly make topical works. Two movements emerged at about the same time, one among English-speaking Canadians, the other among Francophones in Québec.

The NFB's "B unit" made several films for *Candid Eye*, an English-language series broadcast in the fall of 1958 and 1959. These films took a candid-camera approach, using hidden cameras and telephoto lenses. With a few exceptions—notably the first film in the series, *The Days before Christmas* (1958)—they did not employ lip-sync sound. Terence Macartney-Filgate encouraged use of the handheld camera in this film, in his study of the Salvation Army (*Blood and Fire*, 1958), and in his examination of the plight of migrant tobacco pickers (*The Back-Breaking Leaf*, 1959).

Avoiding scripts and letting the structure emerge from editing, the Candid Eye directors shared Drew's belief in an objective, observational cinema. While Drew was influenced by *Life* photojournalism, the Canadian group looked instead to British Free Cinema and to photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who sought the moment of insight that illuminates everyday incidents. Thus, the Candid Eye films lack the crisis structure of the Drew unit's work.

The Candid Eye series ended by 1960, but filmmakers associated with it went on to other documentaries. The most distinctive was *Lonely Boy* (1962), a portrait of singer Paul Anka by Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroitor.

This ironic exposé of how popular music exploits both its stars and its public showed how Direct Cinema techniques could be used to slant the viewer's attitudes. In one sequence, we hear Anka explain how he calculates a gesture while we see him onstage making the gesture, which might have seemed spontaneous without his voice-over. The filmmakers present Anka as confessing to manipulating his fans.

The NFB's move to Montreal in 1956 had created more French involvement in the agency. In 1958, three French filmmakers shot *Les Raquetteurs* ("The Snowshoers"), a humorous and affectionate report on a convocation of snowshoe enthusiasts. Although shot in 35 mm without direct sound, the film was a landmark for Direct Cinema in Canada. The cinematographer Michel Brault plunged into the action in a manner that looked forward to the Drew unit's wide angles and fluid camera (**21.23–21.25**).

Praise for *Les Raquetteurs* encouraged the NFB to establish a French-language unit consisting of Brault, Gilles Groulx, Claude Jutra, Marcel Fournier, and others. *La Lutte* ("The Match," 1961), *Golden Gloves* (1961), and *Québec-USA* (1962) revealed the French team's proficiency with the new equipment and the members' dedication to a committed version of Direct Cinema. Unlike the Candid Eye group, which embraced an aesthetic of objectivity, the French team identified with the people and their urban popular culture.

The urge to explore the social identity of the Francophone community came to the fore in the feature-length *Pour la suite du monde* ("For the Rest of the World," aka *Moontrap*, 1963). Cameraman Michel Brault, the poet Pierre Perrault, and their sound recordist lived for a year in an isolated French Canadian village where a variant of seventeenth-century French was still common speech. Consisting primarily of interviews with people recalling the community's history, *Pour la suite du monde* illustrates what Perrault called *cinéma véçu* ("lived cinema"). "Nothing is more real than an old man telling of an event he has lived through. Often the facts themselves may not have any value but the telling of them has."[5] Perrault brought to light the history and customs of the French Canadian population through several later films.

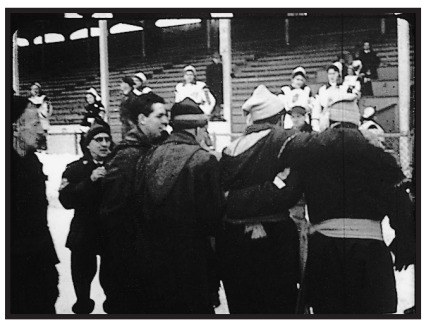
France: Cinéma Vérité and Provocation

In France, Direct Cinema emerged not out of television but out of Jean Rouch's ethnographic inquiries. The key film, and the most influential work of Direct Cinema in any country, was *Chronique d'un été* (*Chronicle of a Summer*, 1961), which Rouch made in collaboration with the sociologist Edgar Morin. Out of their collaboration came yet another model of Direct Cinema—one in which the filmmakers did not simply observe or sympathize but rather prodded and provoked.

After a prologue in which Rouch and Morin interview Marcelline, a market researcher, *Chronique d'un été* shows her asking people on the street, "Are you happy?" (**21.26**). In the clichéd and defensive responses of the passersby, the sequence reveals the superficiality of casual poll taking. The rest of the film scrutinizes the opinions and memories of a group of Parisians (**21.27**: **Video 21.1**). Students and working people discuss their lives with Morin, who presses them to explain themselves. Gradually, the interviewees come to know one another, a process that the film documents.

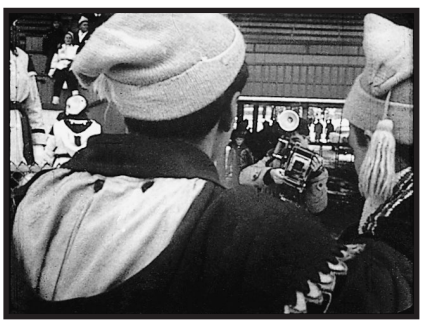
Les Raquetteurs

21.23 *Les Raquetteurs*: a snowshoe winner breasts the tape . . .



Les Raquetteurs

21.24 . . . and is met by his supporters. The camera walks along with them . . .



Les Raquetteurs

21.25 . . . to have their picture taken. Compare *Primary* (21.20–21.22).

Chronique d'un été

Chronique d'un été

21.26, *left* "Are you happy?" (*Chronique d'un été*).

21.27, *right* Marcelline's walk through Les Halles: as the camera tracks further back, she recites her memories of the war into a portable tape recorder in her handbag (*Chronique d'un été*).

Chronique d'un été

Regard sur la folie

21.28, *left* Marcelline explains that despite the camera's presence, she behaved sincerely in her scenes (*Chronique d'un été*).

21.29, *right* The long lens films from a distance as a doctor, wearing a microphone, consoles an old woman in *Regard sur la folie.*

In an extension of Rouch's technique in *Moi un noir*, the last portion of *Chronique d'un été* shows the subjects discussing the film that Rouch and Morin have made. Their comments—the footage is said to be boring, truthful, embarrassing, even indecent—become part of the film (**21.28**). In an epilogue, Rouch and Morin appraise the success of their enterprise and anticipate the reaction of the public.

Chronique lacks the suspenseful drama of the Drew films. The film centers on ordinary people explaining their lives, while Morin's insistent questioning makes Direct Cinema a provocative force. Rouch and Morin did not accept Leacock's demand that the camera efface itself. Viewers of *Chronique* are given occasional shots of equipment or technicians. For Rouch, the camera was not a brake on the action but an accelerator: "You push these people to confess themselves. . . . It's a very strange kind of confession in front of the camera, where the camera is, let's say, a mirror, and also a window open to the outside."[6] An inquiry into personal history and psychology, *Chronique* encourages its subjects to define themselves through performances for the camera.

Chronique's prologue calls the film "a new experiment in cinema-truth (*cinéma vérité*)." The key word is *new* because Morin believed that the emerging technology and the urge to explore everyday life permitted filmmakers to go beyond Vertov's *Kino-Pravda* ("film-truth"; see Documentary Features Gain Prominence p. 161). But the label got applied to far more than *Chronique*, and even American filmmakers began to call their work *cinéma vérité*. A 1963 conference of filmmakers found it too biased a term, but today *cinéma vérité* remains a synonym for Direct Cinema.

A more hybrid version of Direct Cinema was explored in two films by Mario Ruspoli, shot by Michel Brault (cameraman on several French Canadian films as well as *Chronique*). *Les Inconnus de la terre* ("The Unknown Ones of the Land," 1961) records peasants of the Lozère region discussing their problems. *Regard sur la folie* ("A Look at Madness," 1962) visits an asylum in the same area.

Ruspoli's films lie midway between the American "observational" method and the Rouch-Morin "provocational" one. At times, the camera style is discreet, even surreptitious (**21.29**). Yet, even more than Rouch, Ruspoli flaunts the act of recording, showing his crew and ending *Regard sur la folie* with the camera turning from a conversation between doctors to advance toward us (**21.30**). We are continually aware of the filmmaker's presence even if the subjects are not.

A direct criticism of Rouch and Morin's method is to be found in Chris Marker's *Le Joli mai* ("The Pretty May," 1963). Marker could not embrace the Direct Cinema trend, preferring always to retain the voice of a narrator who reflects on the images before us. *Le Joli mai* absorbs Direct Cinema techniques into a larger meditation on freedom and political awareness.

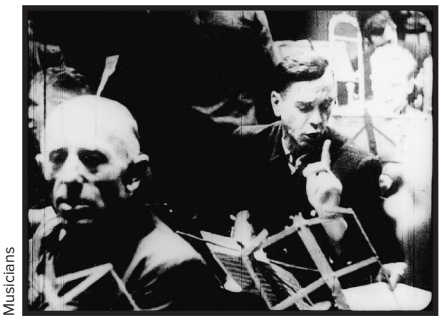
Le Joli mai

Le Joli mai

21.30, *left* Referring to the end of *Chronique d'un été*, Ruspoli's camera leaves a conversation behind and confronts the viewer.

21.31, *right* *Le Joli mai*: "The others don't count much for you, do they?" "The others? What others?"

Le Joli mai


Musicians

21.32, *left* In "The Return of Fantomas," *Le Joli mai* builds up the atmosphere of political menace pervading "happy" Paris. The chapter title ironically recalls the master criminal of the silent cinema (see The Brief Heyday of the Serial p. 50).

21.33, *right* A "snapshot" made possible by the lightweight 16 mm camera: orchestra players in Kazimierz Karabasz's *Musicians* (1960).

The first part of the film inquires into the state of happiness in Paris in May 1962, the moment when the Algerian war ended. Marker's aggressive questioning of smug or oblivious people pushes the confrontational camera to the point of rudeness. He also criticizes the limited, apolitical notion of happiness from which *Chronique* began. (Marker ironically dedicates his film "To the happy many.") A clothes salesman says that his goal in life is to make as much money as possible; a couple in love are indifferent to social issues (**21.31**). Part two, opening with mysterious evocations of terrorism and right-wing reprisals (**21.32**), consists of interviews with people who seek political solutions to contemporary problems.

Harsh and acerbic, shot through with Marker's quirky humor and poetic digressions, *Le Joli mai* asks cinema vérité to recognize the complexity of life and the political forces governing French society at a historical turning point. Yet Marker's meditation has its base in Direct Cinema; his evidence consists partly of his lip-sync interviews. "Truth is not the destination," he conceded, "but perhaps it is the path."[7]

The American, Canadian, and French exponents of Direct Cinema were keenly aware of each others' work. Many of them first met at a 1958 seminar. At a conference at Lyon in 1963, Direct Cinema documentarists debated their differences. Should the camera observe, empathize, or challenge? Is it more authentic to film with several cameras at once? Should the director be the camera operator? Above all, what is the responsibility of the director to the people, their lives, and the event recorded? Direct Cinema, apart from its technical and technological innovations, raised perennial issues of the ethics of documentary film.

By the mid-1960s, several sophisticated 16 mm and 35 mm cameras offered all filmmakers the flexibility of Direct Cinema. The trend revolutionized documentary; after the early 1960s, most documentarists utilized the handheld camera to snatch bits of arresting action (**21.33**). Direct Cinema also gave ethnographic filmmaking a new flexibility. It shaped the course of several national cinemas: the French Canadians Groulx and Jutra moved into features on the basis of their NFB work, while directors in Third World countries made Direct Cinema central to their style (see Chapter 23).

The open-ended, episodic narratives of Direct Cinema also reinforced tendencies in the fiction films of the art cinema. Stylistically, most of the new waves from 1958 to 1967 pledged themselves to the handheld camera, available light, and apparently off-the-cuff shooting (see Chapter 20). (Few directors, however, undertook the harder task of recording direct sound.) More mainstream films, such as *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1963), *Seven Days in May* (1964), and *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) invoked Direct Cinema techniques when a sense of spontaneous action was required. Even

The War Game

21.34 In Peter Watkins's *The War Game* (1966), the staging of a nuclear attack on Britain gains intensity through use of Direct Cinema; here, a handheld shot captures a fireman collapsing by a child.

fiction films set in the distant past or the future could intensify their realism (**21.34**). And Direct Cinema became a central tool of western militant cinema of the 1960s, which relied on unstaged interviews, footage shot on the fly, and the ease of taped sound. In both technology and technique, Direct Cinema exercised a powerful international influence throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

EXPERIMENTAL AND AVANT-GARDE CINEMA

The experimental film also renewed itself after World War II. The wider availability of 16 mm equipment made experimental filmmaking more feasible for the nonprofessional. Most schools, universities, and museums in the United States had 16 mm projectors and could show avant-garde films. Foreign classics had been available on 16 mm from the Museum of Modern Art, but after the war new companies began to circulate experimental films in that gauge. In Europe, which largely lacked 16 mm distribution, newly founded or reopened film archives screened classic experimental films.

A growing number of institutions nurtured experimental cinema. Hundreds of ciné-clubs sprang up in cities and universities throughout Europe; because of censorship laws, avant-garde works barred from general screenings could only be shown in such venues. An international federation of ciné-clubs was created in 1954. International festivals appeared as well, most significantly the Experimental Film Competition at Knokke-le-Zoute, Belgium, begun in 1949. Some European governments offered funding for imaginative "cultural films." In France, theaters designated to show *art et essai* (artistic and experimental) films received some government subsidy.

The most dramatic growth of an experimental film culture occurred in the United States. With 16 mm film stock and equipment available, universities and art schools began film production departments. The wartime work of Willard Maas, Marie Menken, brothers John and James Whitney, and other experimentalists started to circulate (see The International Experimental Cinema p. 277). Moreover, Hans Richter, Oskar Fischinger, and other older avant-gardists had emigrated to America. Experimental film acquired a public identity with Richter's feature-length *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (1946), a batch of surrealist sketches by prominent avant-gardists.

Throughout the period, most filmmakers funded their work in the time-honored ways: from their own pocketbooks or from a patron. Although the US government and private foundations stepped up support for the fine arts generally, only a few filmmakers won grants. Still, in the postwar era, a number of new exhibition venues emerged. Frank Stauffacher's "Art in Cinema" series, presented at the San Francisco Museum of Art immediately after the war, crystallized interest on the West Coast. The New York City film society Cinema 16 was founded in 1949 and grew to a membership of 7,000. In 1960, Canyon Cinema in San Francisco became a similar venue. Students at Dartmouth, Wisconsin, and other universities founded campus film societies, and many were eager for alternatives to commercial fare. A national association of film societies, the Film Council of America (later the American Federation of Film Societies), began in 1954.

Distribution, always a problem for independent American cinema, also expanded considerably. Amos Vogel started a Cinema 16 distribution library, and other companies followed. The founding of the Film-Makers' Cooperative in New York in 1962 marked a milestone. The cooperative accepted all work, making no judgment of quality, and received a flat percentage for rentals. A year later, the Canyon Cinema Cooperative was established on the West Coast.

The United States had developed an infrastructure for supporting the avant-garde cinema. Tastemakers had emerged: Maya Deren, Amos Vogel, the critic Parker Tyler, and Jonas Mekas, editor of the key New York journal *Film Culture* (founded in 1955), organizer of the Film-Makers' Cooperative, and film reviewer for the *Village Voice*. By 1962, anyone with access to 16 mm or even 8 mm equipment could make a film, and it had a chance of being distributed and discussed. While New York was displacing Paris as the capital of modern painting, the United States had become the leading force in avant-garde cinema. In the postwar decade, the filmmaker most

THE FIRST POSTWAR DECADE: MAYA DEREN

The figure of Maya Deren dominated the first decade of postwar experimental film in the United States. She achieved recognition with two films made in wartime, won a prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and became the emblematic figure of the American avant-garde. Renting a New York theater for her screenings, sending flyers to film societies to advertise her work, lecturing mesmerically, she inspired an intellectual public with a new respect for artistic film.

Deren initially studied literary criticism and then became interested in dance. She worked as secretary to the choreographer Katherine Dunham, who inspired in Deren an enduring interest in Caribbean cultures, particularly the dance and religion of Haiti.

In 1943, Deren and her husband, Alexander Hammid, collaborated on what would become the most famous American avant-garde film, *Meshes of the Afternoon*. A woman (played by Deren) has a series of mysterious encounters with a hooded figure whose face is a mirror. She passes through chambers (**21.35**), splits into several personalities, and eventually dies.

The drifting protagonist and the dream structure were conventions of what came to be called the *trance film*. Strong cues that the images are projections of the heroine's anxieties also initiated a long line of "psychodramas" in American experimental film. Stylistically, *Meshes* creates a nonrealistic spatial and temporal continuity through false eyeline matches of the sort already exploited in the avant-garde tradition.

Hammid (whose original name was Hackenschmied) had made some experimental narratives himself in his native Prague, and *Meshes* has strong resemblances to *Un Chien andalou*, *Blood of a Poet*, and *Vampyr*. But Deren

21.35 Air and space as gauzy barriers in *Meshes of the Afternoon.*

disavowed any connection with the European tradition of experiment, rejecting the continental version of Surrealism for relying too much on the unconscious. "Creativity," she noted, "consists in a logical, imaginative extension of a known reality."[8] Moreover, making a woman the protagonist alters the implications of the role changes (**21.36, 21.37**).

Deren went on to make another psychodrama, *At Land* (1944), in which she plays a woman emerging from the sea and crawling across a variety of landscapes. This film was almost completely Deren's creation, with Hammid serving occasionally as a technical adviser.

Deren's postwar films marked a new phase in her creative development. She initiated a series of dance films with *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945), an exploration of the unique ways in which framing and editing could

21.36, *left* *Meshes of the Afternoon*: the abject figure of the early sequences . . .

21.37, *right* . . . becomes a cool assassin.

(continued)

THE FIRST POSTWAR DECADE: MAYA DEREN, continued

A Study in Choreography for Camera

21.38 *A Study in Choreography for Camera*: the dancer lifts a leg in a forest . . .

A Study in Choreography for Camera

21.39 . . . and through a match-on-action cut, the movement continues in a studio.

create an "impossible" time and space (**21.38, 21.39**). A similar examination of movement dominates *Meditation on Violence* (1948), a choreographic study of Chinese boxing.

Ritual in Transfigured Time (1946) combines techniques of the dance films with the trancelike narrative of psychodrama. A woman whose identity shifts across two bodies drifts through three rituals—domestic work (**21.40**), flirtatious socializing, and sexual pursuit. Slow motion, freeze-frames, and Deren's elliptical match cuts "transfigure" the time of these social rites. Deren saw deep affinities between artistic form and the rote gestures of social ceremonies. "Historically, all art derives from ritual. In ritual, the form is the meaning."[9]

Supported by a Guggenheim grant, Deren went to Haiti to make a film on Voudoun dance and ritual. Although she never competed the film, she did publish a book, *Divine Horsemen: The Voodoo Gods of Haiti* (1953). She finished another dance film, *The Very Eye of Night* (1959), before her death in 1961.

In New York, Deren adopted the image of a Voudoun priestess, gifted with the power to bless her friends and curse her enemies. An extroverted, dynamic organizer, she formed a community of filmmakers eventually in 1953 named the Independent Film Foundation, which held monthly meetings for screenings, lectures, and heated disputes.

Ritual in Transfigured Time

21.40 *Ritual in Transfigured Time*: winding yarn as an image of both unwinding time and women's domestic rituals.

In specialized journals and the general press, Deren promoted avant-garde cinema. She also elaborated a provocative theory of film form and expression. She distinguished between a "horizontal" cinema that emphasizes action and plot and a "vertical" cinema that "probes the ramifications of the moment," emphasizing not what is happening but "what it feels like or means."[10]

Pull My Daisy

21.41 "The Bishop" receives a jazz serenade while Allen Ginsberg pesters him with question about what is holy (*Pull My Daisy*).

responsible for establishing experimental cinema in the United States was Maya Deren (see The First Postwar Decade: Maya Deren box).

As in earlier epochs, experimental filmmakers were more closely tied to the world of the fine arts than to the commercial film industry. Some filmmakers continued to animate abstract paintings or illustrate passages drawn from classical music (e.g., Jean Mitry's *Pacific 231*, 1949). Stylistically, several postwar filmmakers were influenced by Surrealism and Dada. During the 1950s, others found inspiration in contemporary trends that favored an intuitive, personal approach to creation. Abstract Expressionist painting had centered on the spontaneous creativity of the artist, who might splatter and drip paint as Jackson Pollock did. Critics compared this "gestural painting" to the writings of Jack Kerouac and other "Beats," who advocated an impulsive, nonintellectual approach to experience.

Some avant-garde painters and poets moved into film. In Paris, the Lettrist movement of the late 1940s experimented with the pure sound of verse and the arrangement of letters on the printed page; it soon made filmmaking integral to its program. A breakaway Lettrist group eventually founded the "anti-art" Situationist International, which also produced several films. In the early 1960s in the United States, experimental films were made by artists associated with Pop Art and the Fluxus group. Avant-garde composers, such as Steve Reich and Terry Riley, assisted their filmmaker friends by scoring films or performing live accompaniment.

At certain moments, experimental filmmaking spread beyond the fine-arts world and made contact with wider audiences. Typically, this occurred when the filmmakers addressed a distinct subculture of viewers. For example, *Pull My Daisy* (1959) attracted attention because of its ties to the Beat milieu; its narration was written and recited by Jack Kerouac, and its veneer of loose improvisation reflected the hipster attitude to life (**21.41**). Soon afterward, experimental films drew audiences in the worldwide "counterculture."

Abstraction, Collage, and Personal Expression

The new avenues of expression encouraged the continuation of many prewar tendencies. Dada and surrealist influences continued throughout the postwar era. For example, Dada's anti-art impulses can be seen in the films made by the French Lettrists. Their leader, Isidore Isou, argued that linguistic signs were more important than images. Updating the strategy of Marcel Duchamp's *Anémic cinema* (1926; see Dada Filmmaking), he argued for a *cinéma discrépant* ("cinema of discrepancy"), in which the sound track dominates the image. Guy Debord's Lettrist film *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* ("Howls for de Sade," 1952)

Renaissance

21.42 The reassembly process nears completion in *Renaissance.*

achieved Isou's program by eliminating all images. A silent black screen alternates with a white screen that is accompanied by a voice-over harangue.

Surrealist imagery pervaded the work of the Polish animator Walerian Borowczyk. His *Les Jeux des anges* ("Games of Angels," 1964), made in France, presents a series of undefinable objects and nonsense syllables flying past the camera before what seem to be disembodied human organs start to fight. *Renaissance* (1963) uses stop-motion in reverse to make messy heaps of material on a floor assemble into a series of ordinary but disquieting objects: a table, a stuffed owl, an antique doll (**21.42**). In the end, a grenade explodes the still life.

Besides Dada and Surrealist tendencies, four major trends dominated avant-garde filmmaking between the late 1940s and the early 1960s: abstract film, experimental narrative, the lyrical film, and the experimental compilation film.

Abstract Film The abstract film had emerged in the 1920s with such works as Walter Ruttmann's *Lichtspiel Opus 1* and Viking Eggeling's *Diagonal Symphony* (see Abstract Animation p. 152). Several Americans who made abstract films during the war (see Animation p. 281) continued their experiments in the postwar decades. Harry Smith, who created his early abstractions directly on the film strip, began to use a camera to shoot painted imagery (**Color Plate 21.1**). Douglass Crockwell employed cut-outs, frame-by-frame painting, and color-veined blocks of wax in *Glens Falls Sequence* (1946) and *The Long Bodies* (1947; **Color Plate 21.2**). Marie Menken painted designs on film that present one pattern onscreen and another when one examines the film strip (e.g., *Copycat*, 1963; **Color Plate 21.3**).

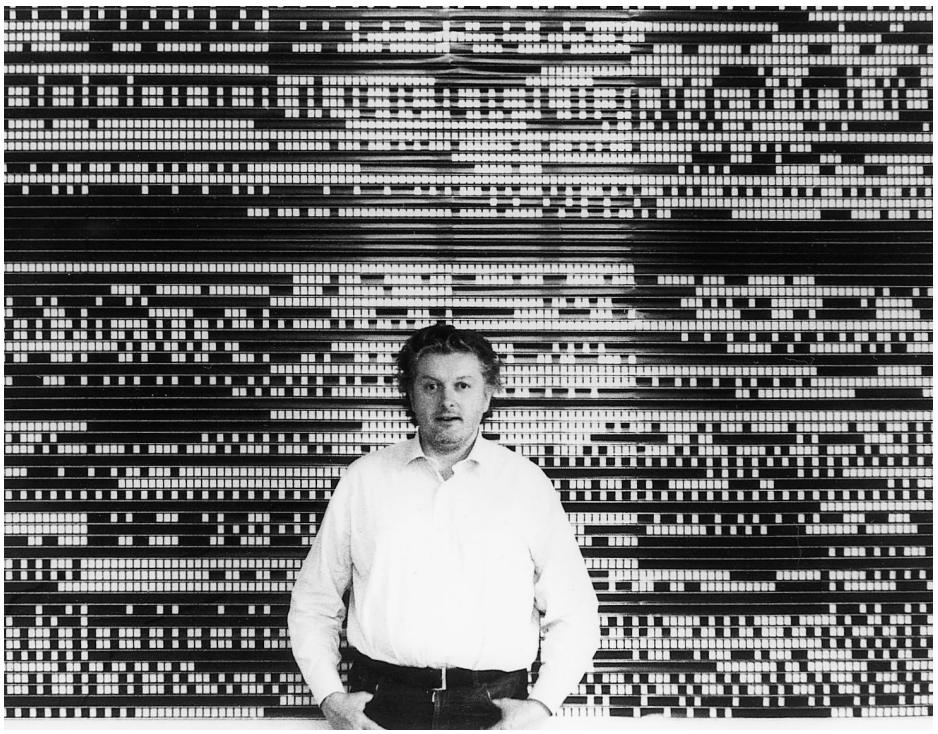
The Canadian Norman McLaren practiced many forms of animation, including the technique of animating three-dimensional objects (dubbed by McLaren "pixillation"). It was, however, principally his abstract animation that garnered praise for his unit at the NFB. Soon after Len Lye, McLaren mastered painting and scratching directly on film, and his hand-painted *Begone Dull Care* (1949) and *Blinkity Blank* (1955; **Color Plate 21.4**) were shown and admired in art theaters throughout North America.

Two other exponents of abstraction, John and James Whitney, won a prize for their *Variations* (1943) at Knokke in 1949. John went on to experiment with computer imagery, while James devised a dot-painting method that could generate mandala shapes and kinetic patterns reminiscent of Op Art (**Color Plate 21.5**). In a similar vein was the abstract animation of Jordan Belson, who sought to induce Zen-like states (**Color Plate 21.6**).

Smith, McLaren, the Whitneys, and Belson presented rich, elaborate works, but other filmmakers took a more reductive approach to abstraction. The Viennese filmmaker Dieter Rot created his "Dots" series (1956–1962) by punching different-size holes in black leader. When projected, the holes appeared as shifting or expanding white disks. Perhaps the height of such reduction was reached in *Arnulf Rainer* (1960). Here the Austrian Peter Kubelka created a film wholly out of patterns of pure white and black frames, which generated a rhythmic flicker onscreen and produced spectral afterimages in the viewer's eye (**21.43**).

All these experiments relied on filming purely abstract designs, often frame by frame. The filmmaker could also shoot objects in ways that brought out their abstract qualities. This approach, earlier identified with cinéma pur (see Cinéma Pur p. 156), had been launched by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy's *Ballet mécanique* (1924), and it was taken up throughout the postwar era. Charles and Ray Eames's *Blacktop* (1950) recalls Joris Ivens's *Rain* in its scrutiny of the patterns formed by foaming water. In Kubelka's *Adebar* (1957), printing processes turn footage of people dancing in a café into a flow of negative images, inverted or flipped end for end. Shirley Clarke's *Bridges Go Round* (1958) employs more complicated laboratory effects, including tinting and superimposition to bring out the bridges' soaring angles (**Color Plate 21.7**).

The technique of single-frame animation had been devised decades before, but in the early 1950s American Robert Breer hit on the idea of not trying to create an illusion of smooth movement but instead making each frame a completely different image. The results were a


Arnulf Rainer

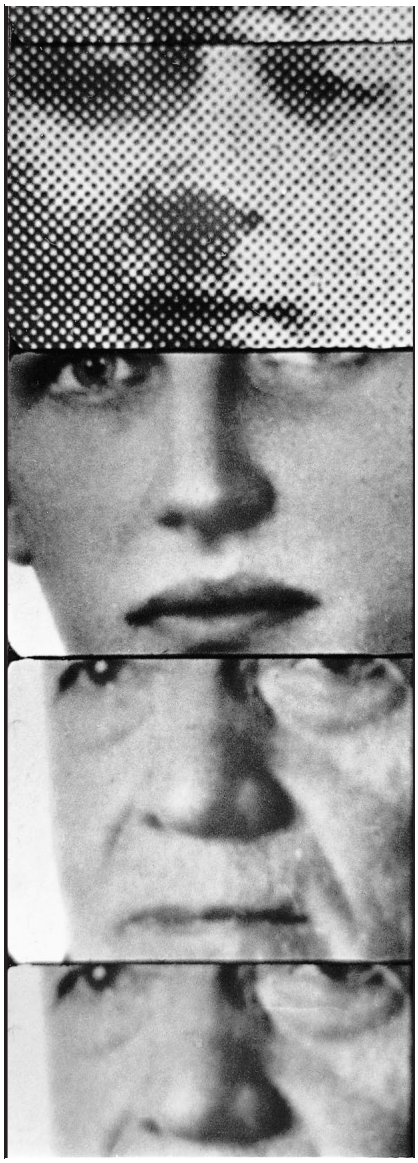
21.43 Peter Kubelka before a wall to which strips of his flicker film *Arnulf Rainer* are attached.

frantic, witty mix of images of familiar objects. In *REcreation* (1956), abstract images swirl together with close-ups of tools, writing utensils, toys, photos, and drawings (**Color Plate 21.8**). Breer went on to incorporate animated footage, handwriting, and other material, as in *Fist Fight* (1964; **Color Plate 21.9**). His films establish a new threshold of minimal clarity: in the context of single-frame images, a shot of four or five frames becomes distinct and vivid.

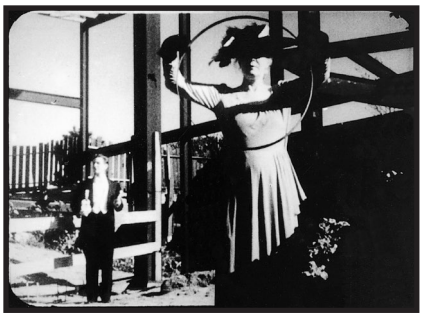
Some European films were abstract in yet another sense, with images organized into rigorous patterns according to formulaic rules. Whether the shots displayed pure designs or distinct objects, the filmmaker could build them into an unfolding structure that owed nothing to narrative. The most evident precursor of this approach is Charles Dekeukeleire's *Impatience* (1929; see Experimental Narrative p. 160), with its few motifs inexorably reiterated. In postwar Austria, avant-garde artists were under the sway of formalistic painting and the serial music of Arnold Schoenberg and Anton von Webern, so it's not surprising that the two major proponents of structural abstraction were the Viennese Peter Kubelka and Kurt Kren.

Building on the discoveries of Breer, as well as on the rhythmic cutting of the French Impressionists and the Soviet Montage directors of the 1920s, Kubelka formulated a theory of "metrical" film: "Cinema is not movement. Cinema is a projection of stills—which means images which do not move—in a very quick rhythm."[11] Kubelka concluded that the basic units of cinema were not shots but the single frame and the interval between one frame and the next. The director could assemble frames into a fixed series and then build the film out of variations and manipulations of that series. For example, because the musical phrase to be used in *Adebar* lasted twenty-six frames, Kubelka decided that all his shots of dancing couples would be either thirteen, twenty-six, or fifty-two frames. These shots would combine to form "phrases." Kubelka then varied the phrases according to a set of self-imposed rules; for example, a cut could link only positive and negative images. *Adebar* ends when all the combinations of shots have been exhausted. The process consumes a mere ninety seconds.

Like Kubelka, Kurt Kren worked with shot units of only a few frames, but his exercises in structural abstraction paid more attention to the imagery. His frame-by-frame patterning is applied to material that is more recognizable despite the brevity of each shot. For example, *2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi Test* ("2/60 48 Heads from the Szondi Test," 1960) atomizes photo-cards from a psychological test (**21.44**). His *5/62 Fenstergucker, Abfall, etc.* ("5/62 Window Watchers, Garbage, Etc.," 1962) teases the viewer with repeated shots ordered according to strict rules. At the start, each shot of the window watchers lasts only a single frame. As the film goes on, each image



21.44 Kren's *2/60*: the effect onscreen is that of turning heads, blinking eyes, and transformed features.



21.45 *Mother's Day*: Mother's "lovely boys and girls" are frozen in childish postures recast by adult fantasy.

21.46 A game of hopscotch in *The Lead Shoes*, with the lens enhancing the quality of heaviness evoked by the title.

extends to two frames, then three, then five, and so on. Kren's formulas are less mathematically intricate than Kubelka's, and their patterning is more geared to the spectator's memory of specific images.

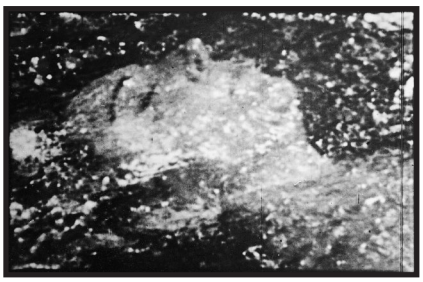
Experimental Narrative In *Entr'acte*, *Un Chien andalou*, *Histoire de détective*, and other films, the 1920s experimentalists had challenged the storytelling conventions already developed by the world's film industries. After World War II, filmmakers continued to create narratives that differed significantly from those produced by mainstream film industries.

Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* and *At Land* (see The First Postwar Decade: Maya Deren p. 433) had crystallized the tendency toward psychodrama in the symbolic dramas of the Surrealists and French Impressionists of the 1920s. American filmmakers found the psychodrama a congenial form for expressing personal obsessions and erotic impulses. In its fluid mixture of subjective and objective events, the genre anticipated the exploration of narrative ambiguities that defined postwar European art cinema.

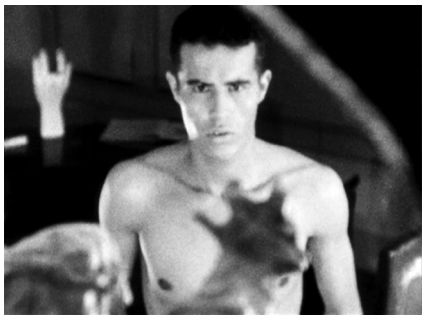
Psychodramas commonly present fantasy tales through highly stylized techniques. James Broughton's *Mother's Day* (1948) offers an adult's fantasy projection of childhood. Adults play children's games, framed in striated, off-center tableaux (**21.45**). By contrast, distorting lenses intensify the grotesque plot of Sidney Peterson's *The Lead Shoes* (1949; **21.46**).

As in *Meshes* and Surrealist works, postwar psychodramas are often presented as dreams. Ian Hugo's *Bells of Atlantis* (1952) uses languorous superimpositions to create an underwater world (**21.47**), but, according to Anaïs Nin's voice-over commentary, "This Atlantis could only be found at night by the route of the dream." Similarly, Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947) elaborates a dream structure reminiscent of *Blood of a Poet* (see Surrealism p. 279; **21.48**). The story of a young man drawn to a sailor and then beaten by a gang of sailors ends with the hero awakening alongside his lover as flames consume photographs of dream images (**21.49**).

Gregory Markopoulos also used dreams and hallucinations to motivate erotic fantasy. Like Anger, he structured his films around protagonists who stood in for himself; like Cocteau, he filled his narratives with references to classical mythology. He made *Psyche* (1947) while a student at the University of Southern California


Bells of Atlantis

21.47 *Bells of Atlantis*: a superimposition reminiscent of French Impressionism.


Fireworks

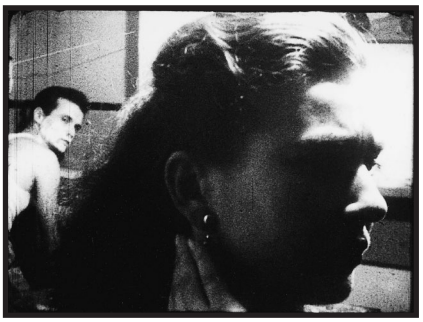
21.48 In *Fireworks*, the protagonist stares at himself, echoing the mirror imagery in Jean Cocteau's films.

Fireworks

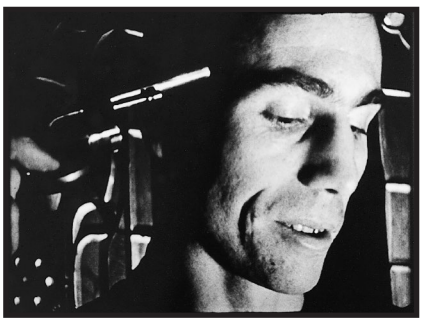
21.49 Photos of pain/ecstasy burn in *Fireworks*.

Un Chant d'amour

21.50 *Un Chant d'amour*: prisoners share smoke through a straw.


Reflections on Black

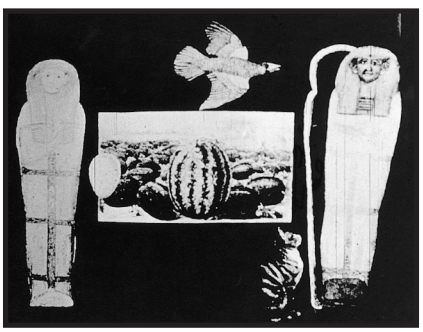
21.51 Tensions between a couple in Brakhage's *Reflections on Black*.


The End

21.52 John takes his life in Maclaine's tense and brooding *The End*.

Science Friction

21.53, *left* A US missile targets Khrushchev in *Science Friction.*


Heaven and Earth Magic

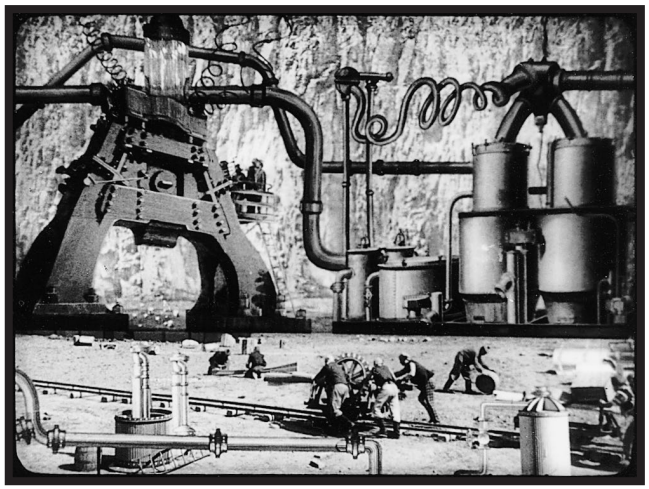
21.54, *right* Esoteric imagery in *Heaven and Earth Magic*.

and then completed several films (*Lysis*, 1948; *Charmides*, 1948) in his hometown of Toledo, Ohio. In *Swain* (1950), an inmate of a mental hospital fantasizes escape from his prison and from confining masculine roles.

Anger and Markopoulos brought male homosexual themes and imagery into films with an explicitness not previously seen in the avant-garde. So did French poet Jean Genet in *Un Chant d'amour* ("Song of Love," 1950), which presents desire among prisoners and guards with Surrealist touches but without the alibi of dream or hallucination (**21.50**). Psychodramatic narratives express heterosexual drives as well. Stan Brakhage's *Reflections on Black* (1955) presents a series of variations on male–female relationships through a mysterious blind man's visit to an apartment house (**21.51**).

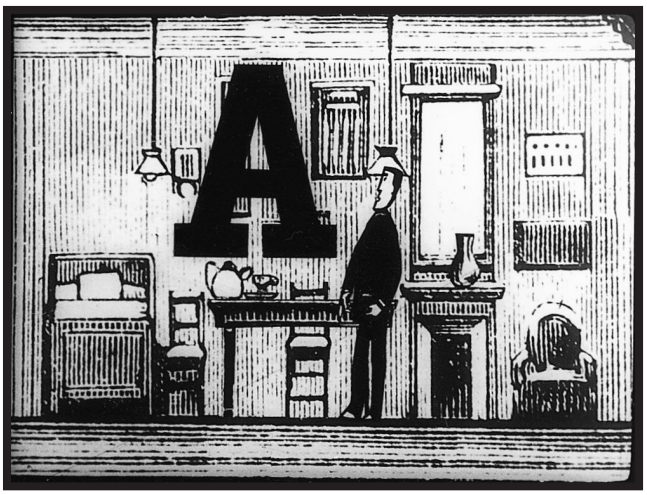
Apart from dramas of erotic longings and personal anxiety, postwar experimental films offered large-scale narratives. Some, such as Christopher Maclaine's sepulchral *The End* (1953), warned against nuclear holocaust (**21.52**). Several filmmakers offered satiric or mystical fables. Stan VanDerBeek's Pop-flavored *Science Friction* (1959) stages the cold war through animated cut-outs taken from TV imagery and news-media caricature (**21.53**). Harry Smith's cut-out animations, culminating in *Heaven and Earth Magic* (1958), present bizarre narratives dominated by occult symbolism (**21.54**).

Far more loosely organized are the anecdotal, almost home-movie, narratives cultivated by filmmakers influenced by the Beat and hipster milieus. *Pull My Daisy* is an example of this genre; another is Ken Jacobs's *Little Stabs*



The Invention of Destruction

21.55 In *The Invention of Destruction*, real people are dwarfed by animated machines in a style that recalls nineteenth-century engravings.



A

21.56 The protagonist confronts his nemesis in *A*.

at Happiness (1959), featuring Jack Smith, founder of a vaudeville act called "The Human Wreckage Revue." Ron Rice's *Flower Thief* (1960) follows the misadventures of the roguishly goofy Taylor Mead, one of the "stars" of American experimental film.

European animators were particularly noteworthy for their experiments with narrative. After the war, several of the newly socialist Eastern European countries formed small, state-supported animation units that often allowed filmmakers a considerable degree of creative freedom. In Czechoslovakia, for example, the puppet animator Jiří Trnka started working in 1945. As with many Eastern European animators, his work made veiled comments on the contemporary political situation while celebrating national culture, especially folklore. The latter tendency is evident in *Old Czech Legends* (1953). Trnka's last film, *The Hand* (1965), is an allegory of artistic freedom. A little artisan who makes flower pots must create a sculpture of a huge, officious hand. When he finally agrees, he must work in a giant cage (**Color Plate 21.10**). Ironically, Trnka was able to make this fable of state-controlled art in a Communist-supported studio.

Another major Czech animator, Karel Zeman, seemed to comment on the nuclear-arms race in his feature *The Invention of Destruction* (aka *The Fabulous World of Jules Verne*, 1957), which combines live action, special effects, and animation to create a science-fiction film about a menacing factory hidden inside a mysterious island (**21.55**; **Video 21.2**).

The most prominent of the Eastern European animation units was in Yugoslavia. Founded in 1956, the Zagreb studio gained a reputation for highly stylized cartoons, most of them specifically aimed at an adult, art-cinema audience. The films, with simple or lyrical stories that needed little or no dialogue, had considerable international appeal. The comedies usually satirized modern life, as in *Ersatz* (1961, Dušan Vukotić), in which a man's visit to the beach ends when everything—including the hero and the scenery—turn out to be inflatable imitations.

Jan Lenica began work in Poland, moved to France, and also worked in Germany. His French-made *A* (1964) typifies much European narrative animation by combining the humorous and the threatening. A writer is tyrannized by an enormous letter "A" that invades his home (**21.56**); then, just as he thinks he has finally gotten rid of it, there appears a giant "B".

Alexandre Alexëieff and Claire Parker, back in France after the war, continued to support themselves by doing advertisements. They also made more pinboard films (see Animation p. 280). *The Nose* (1963), an adaptation of a tale by Nikolay Gogol, alludes evocatively to the original story rather than presenting it in linear fashion (**21.57**).

The Lyrical Film As continuations of prewar genres, abstract film and experimental narrative appealed to well-established avant-garde conventions. But new genres were created as well. The most influential was called the poetic, or lyric, film. Here the filmmaker seeks to capture a personal perception or emotion, much as a poet conveys a flash of insight in a brief lyric. The film lyric aims to convey a sensation or a mood directly, with little or no recourse to narrative structure.

The Nose

21.57 The discomfited hero tries to retrieve his nose, now grown into a government official (*The Nose*).

Stan Brakhage, one of the most influential avant-garde filmmakers of the postwar era, established the genre of the lyrical film (see The Second Postwar Decade: Stan Brakhage box). Other filmmakers followed him, including Charles Boultenhouse in *Hand Written* (1959) and Bruce Baillie in *To Parsifal* (1963). Brakhage's footage of his family, pets, and household showed that the lyric form could work with intimate, home-movie material. The lyric mode led filmmakers to explore the film journal or diary, in which the filmmaker records impressions of daily existence (e.g., Jonas Mekas's *Walden*, completed 1969). There was also the film "portrait," such as Markopoulos's *Galaxie* (1966), which consists of thirty brief films depicting friends.

The experimental narrative and the lyric film incorporate abstract imagery and structure. Broughton's hard-edged compositions emphasize the design of the shot, while Anger's play with lighting and focus to soften outlines and make the image fairly abstract. Brakhage's films exploit reflections, spectral diffusion, and hand-painting on the film strip. Markopoulos interrupts his erotic quest tales with brief clusters of single-frame shots, film phrases that recall the abstract modules of Kren and Kubelka. And the animators who worked in narrative often used abstraction; Zagreb films display flat, painterly backgrounds (**Color Plate 21.13**). In most narrative and lyric works, however, abstraction carries symbolic overtones, enhances expressive qualities, or conveys that direct perception that Brakhage believed to be the mission of art.

The Experimental Compilation Film This postwar trend also has few antecedents in earlier years, though Joseph Cornell's *Rose Hobart* (1939; see Surrealism) is an important one. In this genre, the filmmaker either gathers footage from a variety of sources and cuts it together or trims and rearranges someone else's finished film. The result conveys an emotion or builds up metaphorical associations. Unlike the compilation documentary, the avant-garde compilation, or assemblage, film avoids an overt message and uses the original footage in satiric or shocking ways.

Perhaps the earliest postwar assemblage films came from the Lettrist movement in Paris. Isidore Isou's *Traité de bave et d'éternité* (aka *Venom and Eternity*, 1951) blends casual footage, scratched film, black screen, and flicker. Isou's unflagging commentary in *Traité* is deliberately out of synchronization. Maurice Lemaître's *Le Film est déjà commencé?* ("Has the Film Already Started?," 1951) portrays a phantasmagoric visit to the movies. Anticipating many of the devices that avant-gardists would exploit in coming years, Lemaître pulled together clips from *Intolerance*, trailers, and previous Lettrist films and mixed these bits with negative and tinted footage, perforation strips, and flash frames—all accompanied by snatches of classical music and a sneering commentator reading harsh reviews that the film is likely to receive.

Other European avant-gardists produced such assemblage films during the 1950s and early 1960s. Guy Debord's *Sur le passage de quelques personnes à travers une assez courte unité de temps* ("On the Passage of a Few People through a Rather Brief Moment in Time," 1959) combines news footage, advertising shots, and snatches of fiction films with scenes staged and shot by Debord himself. It became an avant-garde parallel to *Night and Fog* and prepared a path for the collage features of European modernism of the 1960s.

In the United States, the sculptor Bruce Conner brought the avant-garde compilation film to notice with *A Movie* (1958). Conner juxtaposes thrilling scenes from Westerns and jungle pictures with eerie newsreel shots of death-defying stunts and man-made disasters, interrupted by intertitles repeating the film's title. The brief *Cosmic Ray* (1961) is an orgiastic montage of reportage and stock footage, linking sexuality to violence and timed to Ray Charles's song, "What'd I Say."

Success and New Ambitions

Encouraged by the support for experimental filmmaking, avant-gardists in all these genres moved toward works of ambitious length and thematic breadth. Gregory Markopoulos's *Twice a Man* (1963) takes nearly an hour to unfold the interwoven points of view of four characters. Bruce Baillie's *Mass: For the Dakota Sioux* (1964) uses the Roman Catholic

THE SECOND POSTWAR DECADE: STAN BRAKHAGE

The possibility that cinema could dwell on the imaginative resonance of the instant, manifested in Deren's *Meshes* and in Markopoulos's psychodramas, was taken in nonnarrative directions by Brakhage. During his stay at the Institute of Fine Art in San Francisco and in his travels between Colorado, California, and Manhattan, Brakhage came to know experimentalists of the older generation—Broughton and Peterson on the West Coast; Deren, Menken, Maas, and Joseph Cornell (see Surrealism p. 279) in New York. He absorbed ideas from all of them but quickly forged his own personal style.

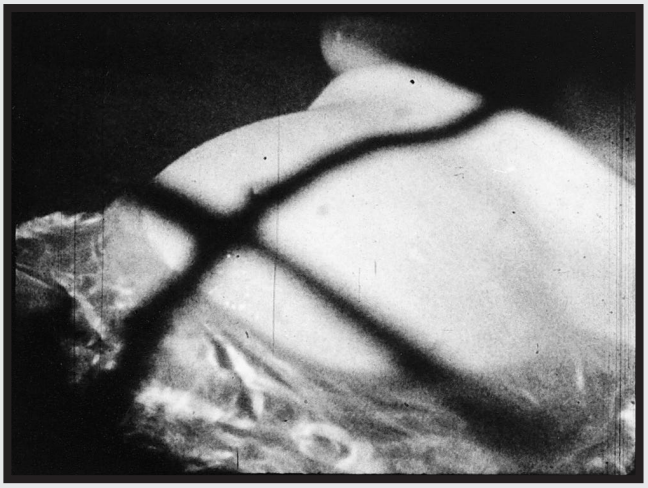
Brakhage defined the film lyric in his work from the mid-1950s: *The Wonder Ring* (1955), *Flesh of Morning* (1956), *Nightcats* (1956), and *Loving* (1956). For Brakhage, the lyrical film records the act of seeing and the flow of imagination. In his "first-person" filmmaking, a jerky pan becomes a glance; a flash frame, a glimpse; a flurry of cuts, sensory transport. Brakhage's films capture light as it radiates, reflects, refracts, dapples, and dazzles. *The Wonder Ring*, commissioned by Cornell when he heard that the New York City elevated train was about to be destroyed, gives us the city as a stream of layers, warped and fractured by the glass of the train windows (**Color Plate 21.11**). The abstract patterns suggest light hitting the eye and stirring associations.

Brakhage continued to explore the lyric in his "domestic" films, such as *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959) and *Thigh Line Lyre Triangular* (1961), his "cosmic" cycle *Dog Star Man* (completed in 1964), his 8 mm series *Songs* (1964–1969), and his cycle *Scenes from Under Childhood* (completed in 1970). His output was prodigious—more than fifty films in the 1960s and nearly a hundred in the 1970s.

The most elaborate of Brakhage's films of this period is *Anticipation of the Night* (1958). Here a sketchy psychodrama about a man hanging himself is recast by the lyric approach. The protagonist is not even a body, only a shadow. Most of the film is an exploration of surface, hue, and movement in the visible world. An aggressive handheld camera makes light smear and blur across the frame (**Video 21.3**). Brakhage links shots by texture or color, as when a light-streaked stretch of night footage is cut to a burst of light through treetops. *Anticipation of the Night* established the lyrical film as one of America's central contributions to avant-garde cinema.

Brakhage pursued the genre with a series of films about his family. In *Window Water Baby Moving*, Jane Brakhage's pregnancy and childbirth is rendered in flashbacks and a weave of pictorial motifs (**21.58**).

Brakhage considered the artist as a visionary who perceives and feels more deeply than others. He sought to capture on film untutored vision, a sense of space and light unspoiled by knowledge and social training:



Window Water Baby Moving

21.58 Motifs of light, fertility, merge in *Window Water Baby Moving*.

The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes

21.59 A corpse's flesh as lyric material in Brakhage's *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes*.

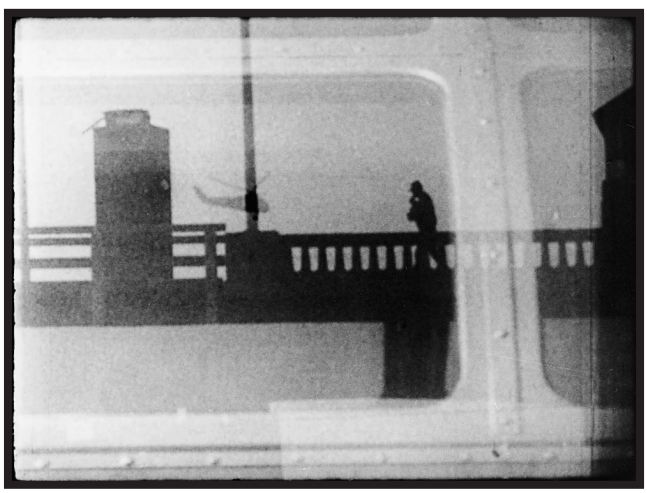
> Imagine an eye unruled by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of "Green"? . . . Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of color. Imagine a world before the "beginning was the word."[12]

Brakhage believed that even unpleasant sights—a rotting dog in *Sirius Remembered* (1959), autopsies in *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes* (1970; **21.59**)—become

revelatory visual experiences when seized by the artist's innocent eye.

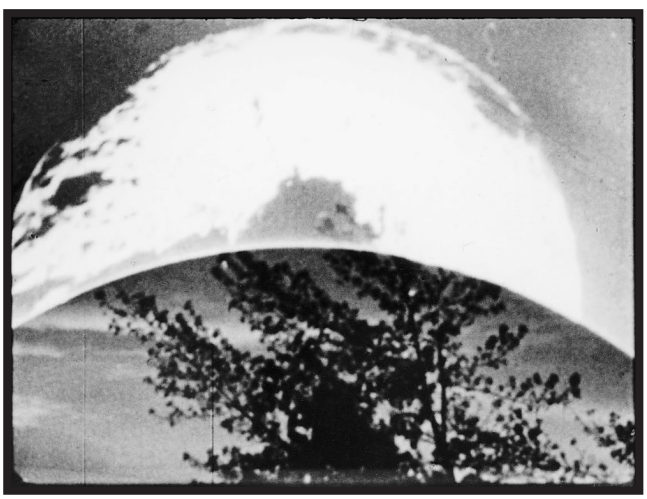
This Romantic trust in the creative imagination went along with a modernist insistence on abstraction and intricate formal play. Brakhage's transformation of everyday objects into sheer patterns puts him in the tradition of cinéma pur (see Cinéma Pur; **Color Plate 21.12**). His work bears traces of currents outside the cinema as well—the poetry of Kenneth Rexroth and Robert Duncan, the photography of his teacher Minor White, and the painting of Abstract Expressionism. Critics found in Brakhage's roaming camera the spontaneity of Jackson Pollock's gestural painting.

Brakhage's work encouraged filmmakers to trust their immediate impressions and to make even editing and laboratory work serve direct emotional expressiveness. By "deprofessionalizing" film craft—refusing sharp focus and correct exposure, exploiting light-struck footage, showing the splices, filming everyday surroundings with an amateur camera obedient to the movements of the body—he exemplified the notion of the *caméra-stylo* in a way that would have surprised Alexandre Astruc (see The Rise and Spread of the Auteur Theory p. 365). Making a film was now as personally expressive as writing a poem.



Mass

21.60 Baillie's richly textured superimpositions in *Mass* evoke an America choked by technology and mournful routine.



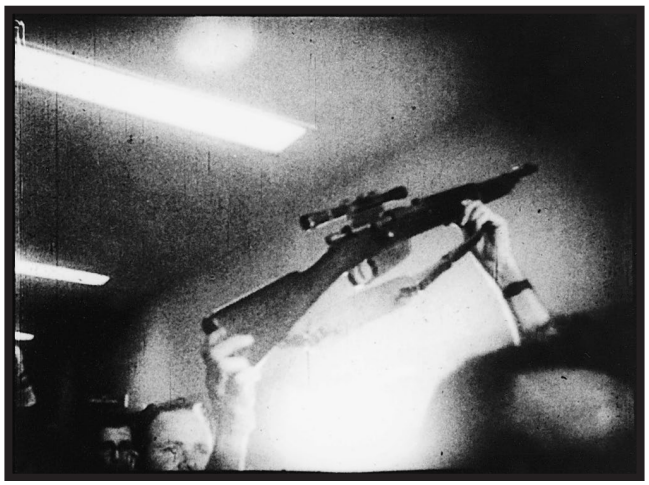
Prelude: Dog Star Man

21.61 Cosmic superimpositions in *Prelude: Dog Star Man*.

liturgy as a framework for a series of lyrical films portraying the degradation of contemporary America (**21.60**). Stan Brakhage extended the lyrical form in *Dog Star Man*, a five-part cycle of films that seeks to fuse nature, everyday human life, the necessity of death, and the rhythms of the cosmos (**21.61**). Brakhage also separated out all the footage in the film, peeling away the layers of superimposition, and called the four and a half hours that resulted another film, *The Art of Vision* (1965). The avant-garde film was laying claim to the monumentality of a James Joyce novel, Picasso's "Guernica," and modernist works in other arts.

In a similar effort toward a broad statement, Bruce Conner made *Report* (1965), a complex meditation on the assassination of John Kennedy. By means of television news material, Academy "countdown" leader, and advertising footage, Conner not only evokes the nation's horror and grief but also suggests that the assassination and funeral became media events. His sound track, drawn from news broadcasts, creates unsettling echoes with the image (**21.62**). Conner completed *Report* on a Ford Foundation grant; that he and eleven other experimental filmmakers received such funding attests to the status experimental film had achieved within American culture.

Work was done on a more intimate scale too. As 16 mm became a semiprofessional gauge, 8 mm (introduced by Kodak in 1932) became the most popular home-movie format. Jacobs and Conner began shooting in 8 mm in the early 1960s, and Brakhage made an 8 mm series, *Songs*, notably the optically dense *23rd Psalm Branch* (1967). Throughout the decade, the personal film lyric



Report

21.62 "And here it comes—the gun-metal gray limousine . . .": commentary as counterpoint in Conner's *Report*.

proved well suited for 8 mm and its offspring, super 8 mm (introduced in 1965). Some filmmakers hoped to sell their films in 8 mm editions, as fine artists sold prints; in the smaller gauge, the avant-garde film might become a respectable, and collectible, artistic commodity.

By the early 1960s, all the genres of experimental cinema were thriving. In the United States, a small, active infrastructure—magazines, distribution cooperatives, exhibition venues—supported and promoted avant-garde filmmaking. A canon of recognized masterworks and major directors was starting to form. At the same time, experimental trends were swept up within a broader social phenomenon. Avant-garde cinema became increasingly affiliated with the fine arts, with the mass culture of youth, and with a nonconformist counterculture. The result came to be called *underground cinema*.

Underground and Expanded Cinema

While the experimental film culture was consolidating in the late 1950s and early 1960s, strange things were happening in the art world. William Burroughs created his novel *Naked Lunch* by cutting and pasting together his manuscript at random. Cellists performed suspended from wires. La Monte Young's musical piece *Composition 1960 no. 2* consisted of building a fire in the auditorium. In Paris, sculptors constructed elaborate machines whose sole purpose was to self-destruct. A Japanese artist laid a clean canvas on the floor and called the result "Painting to be Stepped On" (1961, Yoko Ono). Choreographers were making entire dances out of natural movements, while painters reworked comic strips, advertisements, and magazine illustrations. "Happenings" offered theatergoers plotless, often random, pieces of activity that might continue indefinitely. Under the influence of John Cage and others, avant-garde art was blurring the line between the order of art and the disorder of life (which might reveal an unpredictable order of its own).

Boundaries among the media were also dissolving. Painters staged theater pieces and turned musical scores into graphic designs. Computers made it possible to compose music, generate sounds, create imagery, and merge the results. Multimedia shows coordinated painting, film, music, light, and performance. George Brecht's "Drip Event" (1962), which consisted of letting water drip from any source into any empty vessel, could be regarded as music, theater, or even kinetic sculpture.

This nonconformist, vaguely threatening, art intrigued the public outside the art world. American newspapers and magazines began discussing avant-garde art. With the arrival of Pop Art in 1962, the new experiments came to public consciousness as never before. At the same time, the youth culture of the late 1950s was becoming the counterculture of the 1960s. Many young people rejected traditional values and embraced rock and roll, "mind-expanding" drugs, and Zen and Hindu religious doctrines. For a time, avant-garde artists were automatically taken as part of this social tendency, and experimental filmmakers found themselves in the "underground." In the theater, underground experiments were associated with sexual explicitness, as in the bacchanals of the Living Theatre, or with political critique, as in the work of San Francisco's Bread and Puppet troupe.

Stretching the Limits of Taste and the Medium Within the film community, *underground* initially meant "independent" and "anti-Hollywood." Stan VanDerBeek popularized the term in a 1961 collage-essay that referred to a diverse group of filmmakers (Brakhage, Clarke, Mekas, Hugo, Breer, Lye, and others). Soon, almost all experimental films were called underground movies because they offered glimpses of a world that Hollywood ignored.

Films intended for quite different purposes were absorbed into the underground aesthetic. Conner's compilations became successful shorts at midnight showings. Abstract films formed part of light shows or were screened as *head movies*, supposedly enhancing the effects of drugs. Harry Smith suggested that film societies play Beatles songs while showing his early abstractions. Avant-garde institutions encouraged this manner of appropriating the films. In 1961, Mekas began setting up midnight screenings at New York movie houses, and some commercial theaters started exhibiting the more notorious films. In 1964, Mekas opened the Film-makers' Cinematheque as a venue for experimental work. Independent film festivals became underground meeting points. A chain of West Coast theaters regularly showed midnight programs of avant-garde films.

Scorpio Rising

21.63 Scorpio in his lair, surrounded by pop-culture imagery of rebellion (*Scorpio Rising*).

Flaming Creatures

21.64 Transvestites at the orgy in *Flaming Creatures*.

Some experimental films fit the underground label reasonably well. A film lyric might evoke the mellow spirituality and cosmic consciousness promised by Eastern religions and marijuana or LSD. Brakhage's domestic films, with their presentation of childbirth and lovemaking, achieved some underground currency, while Baillie's polished lyrics were taken to embody the serene affirmation popularly associated with California lifestyles. In *Castro Street* (1966), slow dissolves through switch engines and oil refineries reflect what Baillie called "the essential image of *consciousness*"[13] (**Color Plate 21.14**).

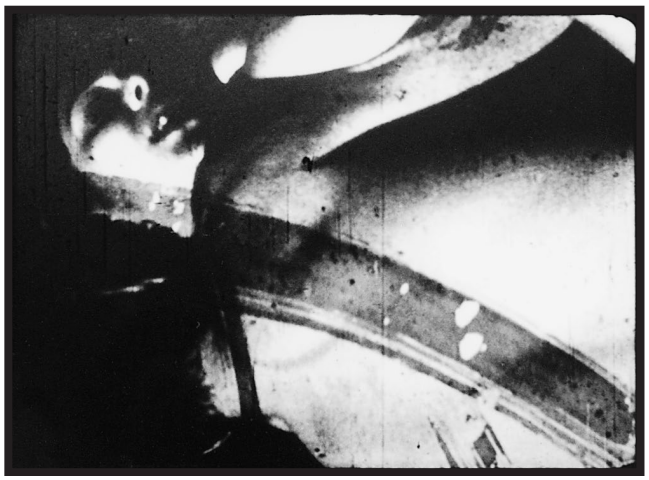
Most audiences expected that underground films would flaunt a raunchy eroticism. The expectation was met in the films of George and Mike Kuchar, twins who began collaborating on 8 mm films when they were twelve. *A Tub Named Desire* (1960), *Born of the Wind* (1961), *A Town Called Tempest* (1961), *Lust for Ecstasy* (1963)—the very titles indicate the high trashiness of the brothers' ambitions. Their cast lists parody taglines: "Steve Packard as Paul—who made love with his body, waste with his bowels." At age nineteen the Kuchars began to work separately, and throughout the 1960s both turned out lurid extravaganzas of frustrated male sexuality. The garish mise-en-scène of George Kuchar's *Hold Me while I'm Naked* (1966) becomes a travesty of the rich colors of Douglas Sirk and Vincente Minnelli (**Color Plate 21.15**).

Quite different from the Kuchars' neurotic parodies of Hollywood melodramas, and even more closely identified with the cinematic underground, was Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1963). Anger links motorcycle culture to homoeroticism, diabolism, the death wish, and the desires aroused by the mass media (**21.63**). He creates an aggressive montage of staged scenes, off-the-cuff documentary shots, and imagery drawn from comic strips, movies, and mystical traditions. In addition, each episode is accompanied by a rock-and-roll song, anticipating the structure of music videos.

The most notorious underground movie was Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963). In about forty minutes, transvestites, naked men and women, and other "flaming creatures" enact a rape and an orgy (**21.64**). Shot in a jerky, awkward style and harshly overexposed, *Flaming Creatures* created the underground's noisiest scandal. After the first screening, the theater management canceled all underground shows. *Flaming Creatures* could not pass New York City censorship requirements, so it was screened free at the Gramercy Arts Theater while donations were solicited. At the 1963 Knokke-le-Zoute festival, the film was denied a screening, but Mekas seized the projection booth and ran the film until authorities cut the power. In 1964, New York police shut down the Gramercy. When Mekas changed to another venue, detectives burst in and seized *Flaming Creatures*. Coinciding with this crackdown was the arrest of a Los Angeles exhibitor for showing *Scorpio Rising*. In court, both cases ended in a victory for the prosecution, with Mekas and Smith given suspended sentences. The underground cinema had lived up to its name.

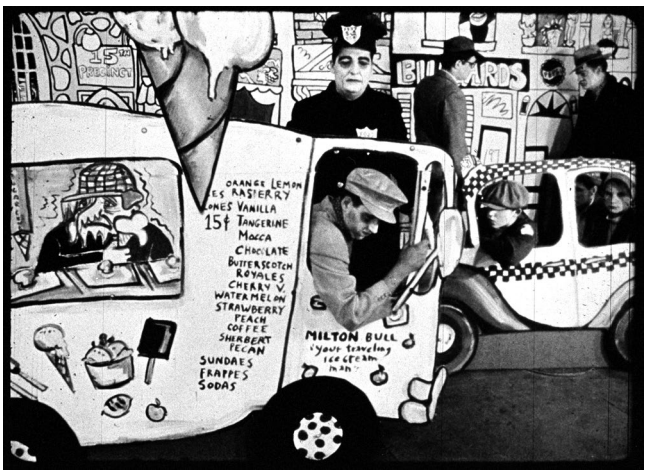
Women filmmakers also helped establish the underground mode. Barbara Rubin's *Christmas on Earth* (1963) portrays a large orgy, with characters in masks or painted faces. The film's two reels are projected simultaneously, with one image inserted inside the other. An equally controversial piece was Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* (1967), which presents copulation through an ecstatic burst of film-lyric superimpositions, applied paint, and rephotographed imagery (**21.65**).

Underground cinema drew upon new modes of visual arts and performance. Some experimentalists followed the cross-media pollination of the art world and postulated an *expanded cinema*. The phrase included computer-generated films (e.g., VanDerBeek's *Collideoscope*, 1966, made at Bell



Fuses

21.65 Distortion and overpainting in Schneemann's *Fuses*.



Fat Feet

21.66 Red Grooms's *Fat Feet* (1966) creates a circuslike atmosphere through slapstick comedy and exaggerated cut-outs, recalling his 1959 Happening "The Burning Building."

Laboratories) as well as multimedia performances integrating dance, music, and theater. Expanded-cinema adherents began to revive Abel Gance's idea of triptychs (see Devices of the Camera p. 78) in multiscreen events. Stan VanDerBeek's *Movie-Movies* (1965) used handheld projectors to present film images and slide projections. In Stony Point, New York, VanDerBeek built a "Movie-Drome," which projected films on a dome while spectators lay back to watch.

Avant-gardists were questioning the specific identity of their media, and filmmakers began to ask what counted as cinema. Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film* (1964) consisted of clear film that acquired scratches and dirt as it was replayed; on some occasions, Paik projected it on his body. When presenting *March of the Garter Snakes* (1966), Standish Lawder began with slides that contained paint and wax; in the heat of the projection lamp, the colors ran, producing movement. Ken Jacobs performed shadow plays in which "close-ups" and "long shots" mimicked film technique. At this point, expanded cinema merged with the "liquid light shows" of psychedelic music performances.

As filmmakers borrowed ideas from multimedia artists, so painters and performance artists moved into film. The Pop artists Claes Oldenburg, Rudy Burckhardt, and Red Grooms had staged Happenings, theater events jammed with shocking, puzzling, or frantic action. Some of these artists made films derived from their performance pieces (**21.66**). Fluxus, a neo-Dada group, presented more minimal theatrical works, typified by George Brecht's "Drip Event."

Andy Warhol and Pop Cinema The most significant underground filmmaker to come from the art world was Andy Warhol. A 1962 gallery exhibit brought to public notice a group of painters who took their material from mass culture and treated it in ambiguously straight-faced ways. Roy

Self-Portrait

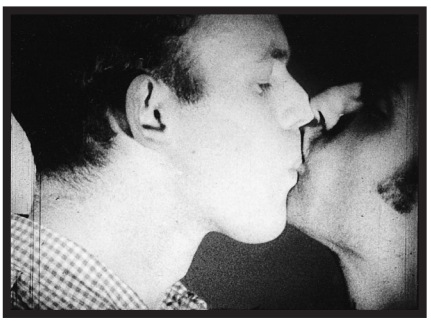
21.67 Sequential variations on an image in Warhol's *Self-Portrait* (1964) . . .

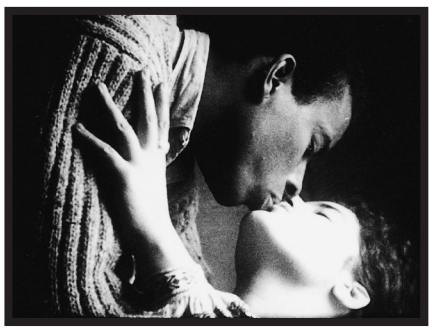
Lichtenstein presented blown-up, hand-painted comic-strip panels; James Rosenquist painted still lifes of housewares and detergents; Claes Oldenburg crafted inflated, sagging hamburgers. Warhol depicted row upon row of Campbell's soup cans and portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. All this Pop Art could be seen as ironically criticizing American life or as cheerfully celebrating the energy of the mass media.

As Warhol became famous as a Pop painter and printmaker, he took up cinema. He made a variety of films, but the ones that made him notorious were stunningly simple. A man sleeps (*Sleep*, 1963); a man eats a mushroom (*Eat*, 1963); couples kiss (*Kiss*, 1963). Some of the films were related to procedures Warhol used in his graphic art (**21.67**, **21.68**); but transposed to cinema, his artistic strategies caused a furor.

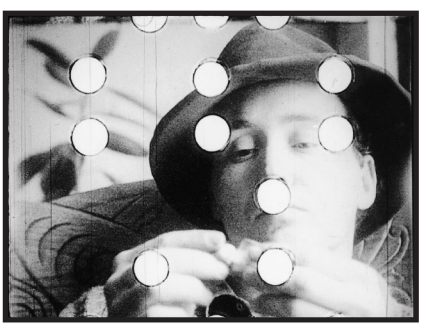
Warhol's first films were unnerving largely because of what they did not do. They lacked credit lists and titles.

Kiss





21.68 . . . and in *Kiss.*


Eat

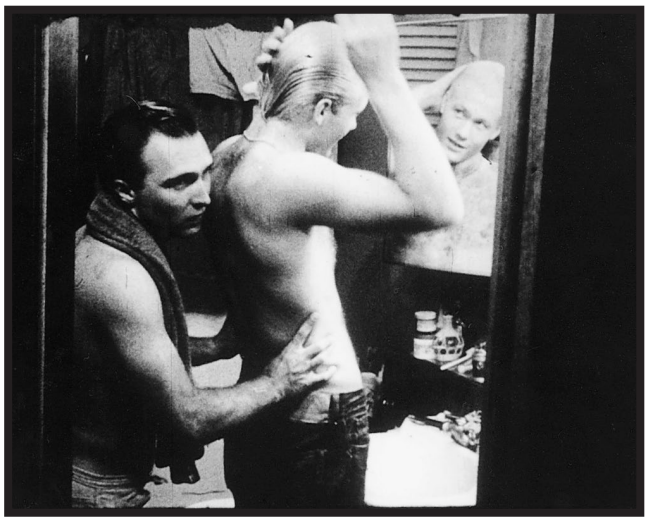
21.69 *Eat*: the punch marks at the beginning and the end of a raw roll of film deface Robert Indiana as he chews a mushroom.

They were silent, even when they showed people talking. They told no stories. There was little cutting within the scene, and only occasionally would the camera pan or zoom. Usually Warhol or the cameraperson simply loaded the camera, turned it on, and let it record action until the film ran out. Most of the editing consisted in splicing the camera rolls together, so light flares and punched footage appeared in the finished film (**21.69**). Astonishingly long (*Sleep* consisted of three hours of footage; *Empire*, 1964, was designed to be shown over eight), Warhol's films posed so many challenges that most viewers took them as put-ons—an attitude encouraged by his own comments. "They're experimental films; I call them that because I don't know what I'm doing."[14]

Warhol took up sound films in 1965 and turned toward performance and rudimentary narratives. For *The Life of Juanita Castro*, *Vinyl*, and *Kitchen* (all 1965), playwright Ronald Tavel provided the actors with semi-scripted situations; Warhol had told him he wanted "not plot, but incident."[15] Narcissistic amateur performers chatter aimlessly and aggressively, each one vying to control the scene while parading what she or he perceives as "star quality." Most scenes are rendered in long takes, with gaps sometimes signaled by *strobe cuts* (flashes of bright light) and disconcerting zaps on the sound track. In 1966, Warhol joined the expanded-cinema trend with *Up Tight*, two side-by-side films with music provided by a rock group, the Velvet Underground. This led to *The Chelsea Girls* (1966), a three-hour feature that presented a string of scenes on two screens (**Color Plate 21.16**).

During the next two years, Warhol moved toward more recognizable narrative form in *I, a Man*, *Bike Boy*, *Nude Restaurant*, and *Lonesome Cowboys* (all 1967). After being seriously wounded when one of his followers shot him, Warhol gave up film directing, although he lent his name to films conceived and directed by Paul Morrissey and he signed some later video work.

Warhol's cinema was an extension of his celebrity lifestyle and the group-manufacture process behind his pictures. Just as many "Warhol" silk-screen paintings were made by his staff and merely signed by him, he came up with ideas for his films, but the staging and shooting were usually carried out by others. Hovering on the fringes of the Factory, his silver-foil-lined studio and social gathering point, Warhol presented



My Hustler

21.70 Good grooming and flirtation in *My Hustler*.

himself as a bland, passive onlooker, naively enthusiastic about everything. "The world fascinates me. It's so nice, whatever it is."[16] His films had the impassive ambiguity of Pop paintings, but they also encapsulated several broader qualities of 1960s avant-garde art.

They manifested in a deadpan way the eroticism that had made a scandal of *Flaming Creatures* and *Scorpio Rising*. *Couch* (1964), for instance, consists of seventy minutes of couples engaging in sexual activity in one corner of the Factory. Moreover, the films' nonchalant depiction of sadomasochism and male homosexuality marked a stage beyond the oblique and overwrought imagery of *Fireworks* and Markopoulos's works. The second half of *My Hustler* (1965) takes place entirely in a cramped bathroom, where gay prostitutes discuss their careers, indulge in casual caresses, and groom themselves painstakingly in a mirror (**21.70**).

Related to the films' eroticism was Warhol's investment in the "camp" sensibility. *Camp*, as defined in a well-known essay by Susan Sontag, "is the love of the exaggerated, the 'off,' of things-being-what-they-are-not."[17] Associated with the gay subculture, camp taste elevated the excessive and extravagant. Kenneth Anger and Jack Smith both manifested camp, but Warhol celebrated it forthrightly in his parodies of Hollywood genres and in the performances of several of his "superstars," notably the transvestites Holly Woodlawn and Jackie Curtis.

Eroticism and campiness gave Warhol's work an underground cachet, but he also won attention with more radical qualities. For example, the idea of reflexivity, already important in European art cinema (see Modernism: Style and Form p. 313), had been significant in American art criticism since the rise of Abstract Expressionist painting. Many experimental films of the period exploited reflexivity quite literally; Stanton Kaye's *Georg* (1964), for instance, presents its fictional story as a film diary, so we are constantly aware of the frame, the cuts, and the sound recording.

Warhol's early offhand, plotless films also manifested the ideal of indeterminacy in art. John Cage had pioneered this attitude in the 1940s, as had the Happenings and the Fluxus events a decade later. Warhol, an apt borrower, gave his films a random, unfinished texture. Often the camera reels could be cut together in any sequence. On initial release of *The Chelsea Girls*, the order of the reels was determined by the projectionist.

In its passive rendering of objects and events, Warhol's work embodied an avant-garde aesthetic of boredom. Cage and other artists had insisted that repetition of even the most trivial action would eventually yield a deeper interest. But Warhol seemed to value boredom in itself. "The more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel."[18] By projecting the early silent films at sixteen frames per second (although they were shot at the normal twenty-four), Warhol guaranteed that his slight material would be stretched to the limit of endurance.

Warhol ascended into Manhattan's world of discothèques and celebrity parties at the moment when the avant-garde was becoming part of the "art business." Dealers, critics, museums, collectors, and news media turned the art world into a realm of rapid changes in fashion and a market that demanded stylistic innovation and fresh talent. Warhol's films participated in this cultural churn and helped bring the underground above ground. By embracing more structured narrative situations, he bid for a broader audience. *The Chelsea Girls* achieved some commercial distribution and attracted unprecedented media attention. His "superstars"—the jittery and shrill Edie Sedgwick; the vacantly beautiful Nico and Joe Dallesandro; the amphetamine-driven Ondine; the perpetually spacy Viva, retelling anecdotes from her Catholic girlhood—had a screen presence that gave the late films entertainment value.

Warhol's status in the art world certainly helped the films achieve fame, but their influence went beyond the shifts of fashion. His early work was praised for a refreshing simplicity that revived the tradition of Auguste Lumière. More generally, his work signaled a reaction against the expressive psychodramas and rich, dense imagery of the 1940s and 1950s. The films' awkwardness, superficiality, and self-mockery seemed an antidote to an avant-garde that was becoming serious and pretentious. Further, by attracting dealers, curators, and critics, Warhol raised hopes that avant-garde cinema might find a home in museums

and galleries, gaining prestige and funding. In all, Warhol became as important to the world of avant-garde cinema as Jean-Luc Godard was to the art cinema.

International Underground The work of Smith, Anger, and Warhol, as well as the continuing traditions typified by Brakhage, Conner, Jacobs, and others, played a central role in creating an international underground. American experimental films had won recognition at the Brussels Experimental Film Competition of 1958 and elsewhere. In 1963, after the Belgian scandal of *Flaming Creatures*, Mekas and the critic P. Adams Sitney toured Europe with the Exposition of the New American Cinema. Two years later, the tour went to South America and Japan. Independent cooperatives sprang up in London and Toronto (both 1966), Holland, Montreal, Italy (1967), and Hamburg (1968), and many of these distributed canonical works of the American avant-garde.

Underground cinema outside the United States explored recognizable genres and styles. In Vienna, Kurt Kren filmed Otto Muehl's "Material-Actions," aggressive and shocking spectacles in which people were rolled in mud and apparently tortured and mutilated. Kren subjected the footage to the same rigorous organization he had applied in his earlier structure-based works. In *La Verifica incerta* ("Uncertain Verification," Italy, 1964), Gianfranco Baruchello and Alberto Grifi developed the avant-garde compilation film by scavenging worn, faded, scratched, and dubbed clips from American CinemaScope films. The filmmakers cut their snippets together in ways that expose Hollywood clichés and create purely formal disjunctions. An even greater expansion of European avant-garde cinema would take place in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s.

In Japan, powerful and scandalous underground works appeared quite early, notably *Love* (1962) and *Onan* (1963), by Takahiko Iimura. On the whole, though, the freedom of directors such as Oshima and Suzuki in the commercial cinema (see Oshima and Others p. 413) delayed a Japanese underground movement. The arrival of US work intensified interest, and soon many taboo-breaking films were being shown in art galleries, cafés, and universities.

Between 1958 and 1968, international experimental filmmaking enjoyed a period of vitality and variety without parallel since the first avant-garde epoch of the 1920s. Through its alliance with a worldwide youth-based counterculture, experimental film also prepared the way for the politically active roles that mainstream filmmakers were soon to play.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Mick Eaton, ed., *Anthropology—Reality—Cinema: The Films of Jean Rouch* (London: British Film Institute, 1979), p. 63.
2. Quoted in Gideon Bachmann, "The Frontiers of Realist Cinema: The Work of Ricky Leacock," *Film Culture* 22–23 (summer 1961): 18.
3. Quoted in Stephen Mamber, *Cinéma Vérité in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Documentary* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974), p. 146.
4. Quoted in James Blue, "One Man's Truth: An Interview with Richard Leacock," *Film Comment* 3, no. 2 (spring 1965): 18.
5. Quoted in Louis Marcorelles, *Living Cinema* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 82.
6. Quoted in "Jean Rouch," *Movie* 8 (April 1963): 22.
7. Quoted in Mark Shivas, "New Approach," *Movie* 8 (April 1963): 13.
8. Quoted in Vè Vè A. Clark, Millicent Hodson, and Catrina Neiman, *The Legend of Maya Deren: A Documentary Biography and Collected Works.* Vol. 1, pt. 2: *Chambers (1942–1947)* (New York: Anthology Film Archives/Film Culture, 1988), p. 566.
9. Maya Deren, "An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form, and Film," in Clark, Hodson, and Neiman, *The Legend of Maya Deren.* Vol. 1, pt. 2: *Chambers (1942–1947)*, p. 629.
10. Quoted in "Poetry and the Film: A Symposium," in P. Adams Sitney, ed., *The Film Culture Reader* (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 174.
11. Peter Kubelka, "The Theory of Metrical Film," in P. Adams Sitney, ed., *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), p. 140.
12. Stan Brakhage, *Metaphors on Vision*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: Film Culture, 1963), n.p.
13. Quoted in *Film-Makers' Cooperative Catalogue* no. 4 (New York: Film-Makers' Cooperative, 1967), p. 13.
14. Quoted in "Nothing to Lose," *Cahiers du cinéma in English* 10 (May 1967): 42.
15. Quoted in Stephen Koch, *Star-Gazer: Andy Warhol's World and His Films* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 63.
16. Quoted in "Nothing to Lose": 42.
17. Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp," in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Delta, 1966), p. 279.
18. Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol '60s* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 50.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On *Portrait of Jason*: "I'll never tell: JASON reborn"

On *Strange Victory*: "Our daily barbarisms: Leo Hurwitz's STRANGE VICTORY (1948)"

PART
FIVE

THE CONTEMPORARY CINEMA SINCE THE 1960s

By the mid-1960s, film was widely recognized as not only a mass entertainment medium but also a vehicle of high culture. The achievements of postwar European modernism, the increasing influence of the auteur idea, and new developments in documentary and experimental film had established cinema as a vital contemporary art.

Very quickly, however, this art form faced challenges. In the 1960s, Hollywood's attempts to compete with television and other types of entertainment led to a series of big-budget failures that left the industry in crisis. During the 1970s, filmmakers tried to appeal to youth by borrowing from art cinema. A new generation of directors, the "movie brats," created an updated version of the classical Hollywood cinema (Chapter 22).

Internationally, from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, the world was shaken by a series of political crises. The Third World, home to three-quarters of the world's population, had been the site of most political strife since 1945. The violence intensified during the 1960s and 1970s. African states were torn by ethnic conflict and civil wars. Right-wing juntas seized power in Latin America, and guerrilla movements arose to fight them. Egypt and Israel went to war in 1967 and again in 1974, while Palestinian resistance groups embarked on military actions throughout the Middle East.

Western leaders sought to contain Communist expansion in newly independent nations. The first notable failure was Cuba: after Castro's 1959 revolution, the country quickly aligned itself with the USSR. Left-wing regimes, many identified with the Soviet Union, also sprang up in Africa and Latin America. Most dramatically, the war in Vietnam demonstrated the extent to which a Western power would go to block the formation of another Communist state. The United States, which committed itself heavily to the Vietnam conflict in 1963, had to withdraw a decade later.

Les amants réguliers

In the United States, a more militant Black Power movement emerged alongside African Americans' civil rights movement. At the same period throughout the West, the postwar youth culture became a "counterculture," a realm in which young people could explore alternative lifestyles. As political conflicts intensified during the 1960s, college students participated in revolutionary politics as never before. The years 1968 and 1969 marked a high point in the radicalization of youth in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

Responding to all this, cinema became politicized on a scale not seen since World War II. In the Third World and elsewhere, political documentaries and socially realistic fiction, often modeled on Italian Neorealism, became vital cinematic forms. More startling, the innovations of postwar modernist filmmaking were melded with the new radical-left orientation to create a *political modernism* that made commercial cinema experimental to a degree comparable to the avant-garde movements of the 1920s (Chapter 23).

By the mid-1970s, many revolutions had failed, as in Latin America, or had revealed a repressive side, as in Vietnam, Cambodia, and China. Filmmakers began to imagine a "micropolitics" that would promote social change at a grassroots level, within institutions. The extreme tendencies of political modernism waned in commercial 35 mm production; filmmakers developed less challenging approaches to storytelling and style. Even the Third World, home of the most militant alternative cinemas, began to produce films for an international audience and to work in widely accessible forms (Chapters 23 and 26). Political modernism hung on somewhat longer in the avant-garde sector, but, by the end of the 1980s, 16 mm and super-8 mm filmmakers had largely returned to variants of "purer" modernism or had embraced "postmodern" modes of experimentation (Chapter 24).

The world's political culture underwent crucial changes with the crises of the Communist world in the mid-1980s. By the end of the decade, Chinese Communism had been shaken by internal rebellion, culminating in a massacre of protesters in Beijing in 1989; thereafter, the country's drift toward authoritarian capitalism accelerated. In 1991, the USSR abandoned Communism and broke up into Russia, Ukraine, and other component republics. The countries of Eastern Europe emerged from Soviet influence and eagerly sought to adopt the market economies of the West, many of them joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (Chapter 25).

The waning of stringent political modernism was also due to the decline of cinema-going. Television and other leisure activities coaxed audiences away from movie theaters, and the boom in home video intensified this tendency. Between 1970 and 1988, attendance fell by a third in West Germany and France, by almost half in Japan, by almost two-thirds in Spain and the United Kingdom, and by almost three-quarters in Italy. Most developing countries saw a similar decline.

During the 1990s, however, the rapid spread of multiplex theaters drew spectators back to the movies in most countries. Government support in various forms bolstered local production, though Hollywood retained its grip on the world market. Innovative alternatives to classical filmmaking arose, from a revision of the strategies of European art cinema (Chapter 25) and from indigenous traditions in the former Third World (Chapter 26) and Asia and Pacific Rim nations (Chapter 27).

The new century presented another era of upheaval. Climate change was becoming more acute. Terrorist attacks threatened nearly every country. In 2008, the collapse of overleveraged banks led to a worldwide recession. Immigrants fleeing crime and poverty in the developing world triggered resentments in host countries. Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine became an attack on the European Union, which was weakened further by Britain's decision to leave.

Far-right political parties fed off these crises, and authoritarian rulers began replacing democratic governments. Pervasive prejudice led women and minorities to push for reforms throughout civic life. All of these trends were shaped by the emergence of the Internet, cell phone networks, and other digital technology that spread disinformation from anonymous sources.

The outbreak of a new virus in China at the end of 2019 created the first worldwide pandemic in a hundred years. By the following spring more than a million cases of infection were recorded, hundreds of thousands had died, and unemployment soared as businesses shut down. Most of the world's citizens were forced to isolate themselves from their communities.

Filmmakers responded by taking up fresh subjects: terrorism, financial disaster, problems of immigration, and skepticism about political leadership. Film culture had to respond to a digital economy while also contending with sexual exploitation and the need for diversity on-screen and behind the scenes. In response to the pandemic, production virtually halted and theaters closed throughout the world. Companies were forced to consider alternative ways to create and circulate films. Not since the 1960s had filmmaking known such intense disruption, and the results affected every national cinema.

Bonnie and Clyde

CHAPTER 22

HOLLYWOOD'S FALL AND RISE: 1960–1980

Star Wars

The postwar struggles for racial equality in the United States achieved partial success in the 1960s during the presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. Both administrations promoted liberal domestic policies (which Johnson termed the "Great Society"), including the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Johnson's "War on Poverty" instituted work-study programs in colleges and created the Job Corps. At the same time, these administrations carried on the policy of containing Communism within the East-West conception of the Cold War. During the 1950s, the United States had begun to support the French against Ho Chi Minh's Communist forces in Vietnam. In 1963, the year in which Kennedy was assassinated, America decisively entered the hostilities. Over the following nine years, the United States would send more than two million soldiers into a war that became increasingly unpopular at home.

The early 1960s saw a new frankness about sexual behavior, accelerated by the invention of the birth-control pill and changing views of women's roles. A freer social milieu encouraged the "counterculture," that broad tendency among the young to drop out of the mainstream and experiment with sex and drugs. The counterculture also played a role in sustaining the New Left, a radical political stance that distanced itself from both traditional liberalism and 1930s-style socialism and Communism. Soon, student movements were arguing for more domestic social change and US withdrawal from Vietnam.

Between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, social activists clashed with authority to an extent not seen since the Great Depression. The liberal stance of the civil rights movement had given way to the more radical position of the Black Power movement. Opposition to US involvement in the Vietnam War had intensified. Social cohesion seemed to vanish. Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, and Malcolm X were assassinated. Police attacked demonstrators during the 1968 Democratic Convention in

Chicago, and President Richard Nixon widened the Vietnam War. Campuses exploded; 400 closed or held strikes during 1970.

The withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam in 1973 left deep divisions in American society. The New Left collapsed, partly because of internal disputes. The shooting of students at Kent State University in 1970 also seemed to prove the futility of organized action. Nixon's successful bid for the presidency resulted from middle-class voters' resentment of Eastern liberals, the left, and the counterculture. Yet less than two years later, Nixon became the first US president to resign from office amid impeachment hearings related to the Watergate scandal.

The era's upheavals led to an international critical political cinema (Chapter 23). In the United States, Emile De Antonio, the Newsreel group, and others practiced an "engaged" filmmaking of social protest. At the same time, with diminishing profits from blockbusters, the Hollywood industry tried to woo the younger generation with countercultural films. The effort led to some experiments in creating an American art cinema.

Responding to the US government's turn to the right in the early 1970s, left and liberal activists embraced a micropolitics. They sought grassroots social change by organizing around concrete issues: abortion, race- and gender-based discrimination, welfare, and environmental policy. Many American documentary filmmakers participated in these movements (see Direct Cinema p. 426). At the same time, however, this activism was fiercely opposed by the rise of the New Right, conservative organizations that aroused local support for school prayer, the abolition of newly won abortion rights, and other issues. The struggle between liberal movements and New Right forces was to become the central political drama of the 1970s, and many films (*Jaws*, *The Parallax View*, *Nashville*) bear traces of it.

The drama was played against the backdrop of a waning US economy, fallen prey to oil embargoes and brisk competition from Japan and Germany. The 1970s ended America's era of postwar prosperity. This period coincided with Hollywood's reinvention of the blockbuster and the rise to power of the movie brats, the pragmatic and influential young filmmakers who became the new creative leaders of the industry.

THE 1960s: THE FILM INDUSTRY IN RECESSION

Superficially, Hollywood seemed healthy in the early 1960s. The Majors—MGM, Warner Bros., United Artists, Paramount, 20th Century-Fox, Columbia, Disney, and Universal—still controlled distribution, and they released nearly all the films that made money. *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Cleopatra* (1963), *Dr. Zhivago* (1965), and other historical epics played for months. Broadway musicals continued to yield such hits as *West Side Story* (1961), *The Music Man* (1962), and *The Sound of Music* (1965), the decade's top-grossing film. Independent "teenpics" such as *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965) catered to the drive-in audience with the lure of clean fun in the sun. The Disney studios dominated the family market with hugely successful films such as *101 Dalmatians* (1961), *Mary Poppins* (1965), and *The Jungle Book* (1967).

Although stars were free agents, many signed long-term production deals with studios. Paramount had Jerry Lewis, Universal had Rock Hudson and Doris Day, MGM had Elvis Presley. Each studio released between twelve and twenty features per year—a pattern that would hold for decades. The Majors had made peace with television. Networks were paying high prices for the rights to broadcast films, and the studios began making "telefeatures" and series programs.

The Studios in Crisis

Despite all the evidence of prosperity, the 1960s proved to be a hazardous decade for the studios. Movie attendance continued to drop, leveling out at about 1 billion per year. Studios were releasing fewer films, and many of those were low-budget pickups or foreign productions that would have been passed over in earlier years. Most of the Majors were stuck with large facilities, forcing them to lease sound stages to television. Big stars proved a mixed blessing. Once they joined a package, they usually insisted on control of the script and direction, along with a percentage of a film's grosses. Yet most star vehicles did not yield profit to the studios.

The bulk of the films released by the Majors were independent productions, often cofinanced by the studio. More and more the films that the Majors financed, planned, and produced on their own tended to be the sort of roadshow movies that had succeeded during the 1950s. During the 1960s, about six films were roadshowed per year, and most proved lucrative. *The Sound of Music* roadshowed at 266 theaters, running for up to twenty months on some screens. Almost no standard releases grossed more than $1 million, but a third of the roadshow pictures surpassed that figure. The success of roadshow films such as *West Side Story*, *El Cid* (1961), *How the West Was Won* (1962), and *Lawrence of Arabia* drove the studios to overspend on epic movies. In 1962, MGM lost nearly $20 million, thanks largely to cost

overruns on *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962). *Cleopatra*'s protracted production pushed Fox to a loss of more than $40 million.

By the late 1960s, every studio faced a financial crisis. Most releases lost money, and executives proved slow to understand that the big picture was no longer a sure thing. Despite *Cleopatra*'s high box-office take, its production costs guaranteed that it would lose money upon theatrical release—as did many other expensive historical epics, such as *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) and *The Battle of Britain* (1969). Nor was the musical film a guaranteed winner. Although *The Sound of Music* was a hit, *Doctor Dolittle* (1967), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967), *Star!* (1968), and *Paint Your Wagon* (1969) were expensive fiascos.

Even the Walt Disney studio suffered a slump during this period. During the 1950s and 1960s, Disney had increasingly focused on its television productions, live-action films, and Disneyland (opened in 1955). Its animated features of the 1960s routinely appeared on the lists of annual top-grossing films: *101 Dalmatians*, *The Sword in the Stone* (1963), *The Jungle Book*, and *The Rescuers* (1977). Disney's death in 1966, however, led to a period of less prestigious and less profitable cartoons. The studio's low point in animation was the expensive failure, *The Black Cauldron* (1985). Not until 1989, with *The Little Mermaid*, would Disney once again produce a stream of popular cartoon features.

The only bright spots were a few low-budget films, usually aimed at the college audience, that yielded remarkable returns. *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) cost $3 million and returned $24 million domestic rental income to Warner Bros., while *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) cost $3 million and yielded $20 million to United Artists. The winner in the low-budget sweepstakes was the independent release *The Graduate* (1967). It cost $3 million and returned $49 million to its small distributor, Embassy Pictures. This scale of profits made the sophisticated young-adult film very attractive to studio decision makers.

The Majors, at their weakest point since World War II, were ripe for absorption into healthier companies. In 1962, Universal was acquired by the Music Corporation of America (MCA), but at least the deal remained in the Hollywood family because MCA was a former talent agency (see Mainstream Independents: Agents, Star Power, and the Package p. 295). But now conglomerates circled the studios. In 1966, Gulf + Western industries (a firm with holdings in auto parts, metals, and financial services) acquired the ailing Paramount Pictures. In 1967, Warner Bros. was bought by Seven Arts, which two years later was absorbed into Kinney National Services (parking lots and funeral parlors). In 1967, Transamerica Corporation (car rentals, life insurance) bought United Artists. In 1968, financier Kirk Kerkorian gained control of MGM, downsized it, and used its assets to build the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas.

Studios used to operating as freestanding companies now found themselves small slices of big corporate pies. Fox escaped for the moment because *Star Wars* (1977) made it self-sustaining, but in the 1980s it too would join a conglomerate, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. As for Disney, despite its weakened animation wing, it released very profitable, modestly budgeted live-action features, such as *Lt. Robin Crusoe, U.S.N.* (1966), *The Love Bug* (1968), and *The Shaggy D.A.* (1976). Eventually, as we will see in Chapter 28, Disney itself became a thriving entertainment conglomerate.

The conglomerates could help the ailing studios by injecting money from other businesses and guaranteeing lines of bank credit. But nothing seemed to stem the flow of red ink. Between 1969 and 1972, the Majors lost $500 million. The studios quickly brought in new executives, often with little experience in film production. Banks forced companies to trim the number of releases, avoid big-budget films, and partner with other studios in coproductions (as when Warners and Fox joined forces for *The Towering Inferno*, 1974). In 1970, unemployment in Hollywood rose to more than 40 percent, an all-time high. As recession gripped the industry, the roadshow era ended. Exhibitors began splitting their houses into two or three screens and building *multiplexes*, usually cheaper shopping-mall theaters. The result was a generation of narrow auditoriums with poor sightlines and garbled sound.

Styles and Genres

With the decline of the studios and the continuing drop in attendance, 1960s Hollywood was unsure about what the public wanted. When a performer won a loyal audience, he or she could count on studio support. Perhaps the most obvious example is Jerry Lewis. After teaming with Dean Martin on several hugely successful Paramount releases in the 1950s, Lewis set out on a solo career—writing, directing, and performing in his own comedies. In most of his films, Lewis gave his idiot-child character a spasmodic, demonic frenzy. In *The Nutty Professor* (1963), he portrayed not only a geeky simpleton but also a suave lady-killer modeled on Dean Martin. As a director, Lewis displayed considerable visual flair: *The Ladies' Man* (1961) presents a women's boarding house as a colossal dollhouse (**Color Plate 22.1**).

The 1960s continued the upscaling of B genres that had begun in the 1950s (see Exploitation p. 297), especially in the big-budget espionage film. The catalyst was Ian Fleming's James Bond novels. Agent 007 proved his box-office worth with the phenomenally profitable *Goldfinger* (1964) and its successors. The Bond films had erotically laced intrigues, semicomic chases and fight scenes, outlandish weaponry, wry humor, and dazzling production design (**Color Plate 22.2**). The series spawned imitations and parodies around the world.

The sexiness of the Bond films was typical of the period. The roadshow pictures and the Disney product provided wholesome family fare, but theaters welcomed more risqué films that could lure viewers away from bland TV programming. Universal's Doris Day comedies (including *Pillow Talk*, 1958 and *Lover Come Back*, 1962) celebrated women's sexual stratagems, often at the expense of the male ego. Other films snickered at promiscuity (*A Guide for the Married Man*, 1967), suburban flirtations (*Boys' Night Out*, 1962), and aggressive women (*Sex and the Single Girl*, 1964).

Some audiences enjoyed films from outside the Hollywood mainstream. Studios distributed films from Europe, not just quickly made costume pictures such as *Hercules* (1957), but also ambitious, polished efforts such as *Zorba the Greek* (1965). British imports were particularly successful. The erotic period comedy *Tom Jones* (1963) and the edgy drama *Alfie* (1966), which traded on the fashionable "swinging London" image, proved popular (see Great Britain: Kitchen Sink Cinema p. 400), as did the Beatles films.

Modifying the Classical Studio Style

Most Hollywood products of the early 1960s had a glossy studio look, but some filmmakers broke with this style. *The Pawnbroker* (1965) and other New York-based films offered a harsh, ethnically inflected realism. Location filming became more frequent, even within cramped bars and apartments. Long-focal-length lenses, which acted as a telescope in enlarging a small area, allowed the cameraman to film from a safe distance on an urban location. The long lens became fashionable; it tended to flatten the shot's space and produce soft, blurry contours (**22.1**). In 1962, Arthur Penn's black-and-white *The Miracle Worker* employed sharp deep focus and crisp lighting (**22.2**), but five years later the much flatter imagery in his color *Bonnie and Clyde* (**22.3**) resulted from extremely long lenses. By the late 1960s, long lenses were used for most medium shots and close views, whether filmed on location or in studio sets.

During this period, directors abandoned the long-take aesthetic of the postwar years and experimented with faster, flashier editing. Richard Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965) fractured the Beatles' musical

Easy Rider

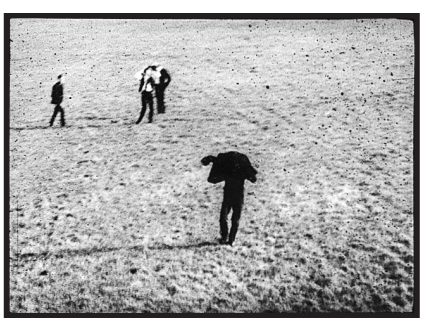
22.1 *Easy Rider*: the long lens minimizes the space between distant and closer planes.

The Miracle Worker

22.2 *The Miracle Worker*: deep focus and the wide-angle lens.

Bonnie and Clyde

22.3 *Bonnie and Clyde*: during the final shoot-out, Clyde Barrow's dying descent is filmed with a long lens, which softens focus and flattens space.


A Hard Day's Night

A Hard Day's Night

22.4, *left* Discontinuity in *A Hard Day's Night*: as "Can't Buy Me Love" plays on the sound track, Lester shows the Beatles romping in a soccer field . . .

22.5, *right* . . . and immediately cuts to them relaxing.

numbers into discontinuous shots (**22.4**, **22.5**). Lester's zany technique derived from the French New Wave, TV commercials, and British eccentric comedy. He pushed fast cutting further in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1966). Other directors accelerated the pace: Robert Aldrich's *The Dirty Dozen* (1967) averaged 3.5 seconds per shot.

Lester created a vogue for wordless scenes, often montage sequences, backed by pop songs. The most famous example is probably Simon and Garfunkel's vocals in *The Graduate* (1967), which comment on the hero's indifference. With the "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" scene in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), the integration of full-length songs into scenes became a staple of American cinema. Film studios affiliated with music companies could *cross-plug* movies and recordings, making the sound-track album a source of profit.

Lester's eye-catching techniques were applied to volatile content by Arthur Penn in *Bonnie and Clyde*. With an average shot length of less than four seconds, the film also popularized the use of slow motion to render extreme violence. The climax, showing the title couple cut down by a hail of bullets, turns into a spasmodic dance through rhythmic slow motion (see 22.3). Sam Peckinpah pushed Penn's approach further by rendering blood bursts and falling bodies in slow motion and a hail of shots. *The Wild Bunch* (1969) celebrates an anarchic band of robbers who are tracked by an obsessive lawman. *Straw Dogs* (1971), with its portrayal of an ineffectual professor taking bloody revenge for the rape of his wife, outraged critics even more. Peckinpah's critics still debate whether his lyrical treatment of carnage distances us, arouses us, or invites us to reflect on our own appetites. After *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Wild Bunch*, fast cutting and slow motion became common ways of presenting violent action.

Innovations such as these arrived as most old-guard filmmakers were in their final creative years. John Ford, Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, William Wyler, Raoul Walsh, and many others who had started in silent cinema or the early days of sound were no longer at the forefront. Ford and Walsh retired after careers lasting nearly fifty years. Their solid technique looked staid, their attitudes old-fashioned. Hawks remarked of Peckinpah's slow-motion filming, "Oh hell, I can kill and bury ten guys in the time it takes him to kill one."[1] "Hollywood now is run by Wall St. and Madison Ave., who demand 'Sex and Violence,'" wrote John Ford after completing his last feature, *Seven Women* (1965). "This is against my conscience and religion."[2]

Identifying the Audience

Ford was right: many boundaries of taste had been crossed. Throughout the 1950s, the power of the Hays Office to dictate film content had been eroding (see Challenges to Censorship p. 294). In the 1960s, major films such as *The Pawnbroker* and *Alfie* were distributed without the Production Code seal, while others carried a seal despite nudity and profanity. It became apparent that the Code not only was ineffectual but also was creating lucrative publicity for the films it rejected. Theaters screening *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966) required that under-eighteen patrons be accompanied by an adult, and the film earned huge profits. The Code was dead.

In 1966, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPPA) stopped issuing certificates. Instead, films that failed to conform to its guidelines were labeled "Suggested for Mature Audiences." Backing down from this toothless policy, the MPAA companies created a rating system coded by letter: G (general: recommended for all ages), M (mature: recommended for viewers over sixteen), R (restricted: viewers under sixteen to be accompanied by parent or guardian), and X (no one under sixteen admitted).

The rating system allowed the industry to present itself as being sensitive to public concern while giving filmmakers license to treat violence, sexuality, or unorthodox ideas. The new latitude helped make hits out of *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Midnight Cowboy* (all 1969). Subsequent films succeeded by pushing the standards of acceptability further. Eventually the rating system was revised, raising the age for R and X films and replacing the M category with PG (parental guidance suggested).

Producers noted that *The Graduate* and *Bonnie and Clyde* had appealed to young audiences, and they learned that half of all moviegoers were aged 16 to 24. Studios launched a cycle of *youthpics*, which offered young audiences entertainment unavailable on television. The prototype was *Easy Rider* (1969), a chronicle of two drug dealers' motorcycle trip across America. Made for less than $500,000, it became one of the most successful films of its year. The youthpics cycle included films of campus rebellion (*The Strawberry Statement*, 1970), countercultural dramas (*Alice's Restaurant*, 1969; *Joe*, 1970), nostalgia pieces (*The Last Picture Show*, 1971), and anarchic comedies (*M*A*S*H*, 1970; *Harold and Maude*, 1971). When *Yellow Submarine* (Great Britain, 1968) became a phenomenal hit by offering a string of "psychedelic" vignettes illustrating Beatles songs,

NEW PRODUCTION AND EXHIBITION TECHNOLOGIES

The return of Hollywood cinema owed something to new ways of making images and sounds. By 1967, the studios depended on selling TV rights to features. As color television became common, the networks demanded color films for broadcast, and Hollywood committed itself to color production. Eastman Color became the stock of choice for shooting and release prints, although some prints were made from Eastman negatives using Technicolor's dye-imbibition process.

The industry had explored various versions of widescreen cinema in the 1950s, and by the mid-1960s a few had become dominant. Most films were shot in 35 mm and masked during shooting or projection to a 1.85:1 aspect ratio. To obtain a wider image with 35 mm, the image would usually be anamorphically compressed, as in CinemaScope (**15.4**). But there were optical problems with the original CinemaScope design, particularly its tendency to make faces fatter in close-up ("'Scope mumps"). The Panavision company designed a better anamorphic system, first used on some late 1950s films. By the end of the 1960s, CinemaScope was defunct and Panavision became the anamorphic standard. For still more grandeur, big musicals or historical epics would be shot on 65 mm stock and printed to 70 mm to allow for multitrack sound. *Exodus* (1960), *Lawrence of Arabia*, and other films were both 70 mm and anamorphic.

Influenced by European films and Direct Cinema, Hollywood cinematographers adapted zoom lenses (see Formal and Stylistic Trends p. 386). A fashion for self-conscious zooming arose, as in *The Train* (1965). By the 1970s, filmmakers felt that such sudden enlargements or reductions of images called too much attention to the mechanics of shooting, so zooming was mostly confined to low-budget films. Still, many cinematographers kept the zoom lens on the camera to allow them to frame a shot precisely without changing camera positions.

Hollywood filmmakers also borrowed the handheld shot from Direct Cinema. The shakiness of the handheld camera could suggest a documentary immediacy (such as the opening of *Seven Days in May*, 1964) or a nervous energy (the roadhouse dance and fight in *Virginia Woolf*). Cinematographers liked the new maneuverability but also wanted to make the handheld imagery steadier. Lighter-weight cameras, such as the 15-pound Arriflex 35 BL, became available at the beginning of the 1970s. Though somewhat heavier, Panavision's Panaflex could still be braced on the operator's shoulder, and this allowed shooting in cramped circumstances. John A. Alonzo used the Panaflex for meticulous wide-angle long takes in Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974; **Color Plate 22.4**). For Steven Spielberg's *Sugarland Express* (1974), cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond obtained tight and steady shots inside a moving car by sliding a Panaflex along a plank.

The Steadicam, first publicized on *Bound for Glory* (1976), was a camera support that used a system of counterweights to suspend the camera on a brace attached to the operator's body. It created smooth, floating tracking shots. Now the operator could stride through crowds and narrow doorways as well as up and down stairways—maneuvers not possible with a studio dolly. Adding to the flexibility of moving shots was the Louma crane, a remote-controlled aluminum arm that could lift a Panaflex high above a set. Both the Steadicam and the Louma crane used video monitors for viewfinding.

The 1970s also saw a revolution in sound recording and reproduction. Robert Altman's *California Split* (1974) pioneered multitrack recording during shooting, planting radio microphones on the actors to create up to seven distinct channels. During this period, the "time code" designed to identify frames on videotape was modified to synchronize the film strip with one or more audio recorders. Time-codes made sound mixing and rerecording much easier.

In sound reproduction, the principal innovations came from the laboratories of Ray Dolby. Dolby introduced noise reduction techniques to the music industry in the mid-1960s. *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) was among the first films to employ them. Several movies used Dolby magnetic and optical processes for multitrack theater reproduction, but Dolby's stereo system did not become popular until *Star Wars* (1977). More and more theaters converted to stereo and surround-sound speaker layouts to take advantage of the more powerful sound tracks.

producers realized that animation could also win college audiences. Ralph Bakshi aimed *Fritz the Cat* (1972), the first cartoon to receive an X rating, at viewers comfortable with the drugs-and-free-love ethos of underground comics (**Color Plate 22.3**).

In the same years, the industry also benefited from a few old-fashioned hits targeting the general audience: the war film *Patton* (1970), the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971), a cycle of "disaster" pictures starting with *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), two films pairing Paul Newman

and Robert Redford (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*; *The Sting*, 1973), and the adaptation of a best-selling novel, *Love Story* (1970). But the tide would really turn in the mid-1970s, when a string of modestly budgeted films by young, largely unknown directors would become stupendously profitable.

THE NEW HOLLYWOOD: LATE 1960s TO LATE 1970s

The directors identified with the "New Hollywood" were a diverse lot. Many—the "movie brats"—were in their late twenties and early thirties. Others, such as Robert Altman and Woody Allen, were significantly older. Some directors, for example, George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola, went to film school, but critic-turned-filmmaker Peter Bogdanovich (*The Last Picture Show*; *What's Up, Doc?*, 1972) and former television director Bob Rafelson (*Five Easy Pieces*, 1970; *The King of Marvin Gardens*, 1972) did not. Some were fastidious intellectuals, such as Terrence Malick (*Badlands*, 1973; *Days of Heaven*, 1978), while others were countercultural movie mavens, such as Brian De Palma (*Greetings*, 1968; *Sisters*, 1973) and John Carpenter (*Dark Star*, 1974; *Assault on Precinct 13*, 1977). While these directors established themselves in the early 1970s, others about the same age came to prominence a little later: screenwriter/director Paul Schrader (*Blue Collar*, 1978), Michael Cimino (*The Deer Hunter*, 1978), David Lynch (*Eraserhead*, 1978), and Jonathan Demme (*Melvin and Howard*, 1980).

Many of the New Hollywood directors self-consciously returned to classical studio genres, paying respects to venerated filmmakers (see The 1970s Big Three: Coppola, Spielberg, and Lucas p. 464). But studios also granted filmmakers the opportunity to create something like European art films. Sometimes a single filmmaker like Coppola might participate in both trends. Both tendencies were characterized by "movie consciousness," an intense awareness of film history and its continuing influence on contemporary culture.

Toward an American Art Cinema

When Paramount Pictures asked Francis Ford Coppola to make a film based on the novel *The Godfather*, he was in despair. "They want me to direct this hunk of trash," he told his father. "I don't want to do it. I want to do art films."[3] That Coppola could harbor such hopes reflects a brief but important moment in American filmmaking. With the late 1960s recession and the search for college audiences, Hollywood became more hospitable to the storytelling techniques pioneered in the European art cinema. One cure for Hollywood's slump seemed to be the art film dwelling on mood, characterization, and psychological ambiguity.

A case in point is Richard Lester's much-praised *Petulia* (1968). In one scene, the eccentric and abused Petulia confronts her lover Archie at his apartment. Lester interrupts their conversation with brief shots: a flashback of Archie trying to return the tuba Petulia had brought him and a "false" flashback of Petulia stealing the tuba (**22.6–22.9**). The film's play with chronology and character subjectivity

Petulia

Petulia

22.6, *left* *Petulia*: Archie explains that he tried to return the tuba Petulia had left with him . . .

22.7, *right* . . . and Lester intercuts a flashback of Archie doing so.

Petulia

Petulia

22.8, *left* Soon Archie learns that Petulia paid for renting the tuba . . .

22.9, *right* . . . and Lester inserts a shot of her breaking a pawnshop window to steal the tuba. This visualizes a lie that she told Archie earlier.

Easy Rider

22.10, 22.11 Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* assimilated the jump cuts that Jean-Luc Godard had pioneered in *Breathless* (see Formal and Stylistic Trends p. 387).

is reminiscent of Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour* (see New Cinema: The Left Bank p. 394).

Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) revived the science-fiction genre while also exploiting the enigmatic symbolism of European art cinema. Long scenes of antiseptic life on the spacecraft (many stretches devoid of drama), an ironic use of music, and a teasing, allegorical ending invite thematic interpretation of a sort usually reserved for films by Federico Fellini or Michelangelo Antonioni.

Some youthpics also experimented with art-film traditions. *Easy Rider*'s rock sound track and drug-laced tour of America may have attracted young audiences, but its style is quite jolting (**22.10, 22.11**). Transitions are choppy: a few frames from the last shot of one scene alternate with a few frames of the first shot of the next. (Dennis Hopper, a fan of underground films, may have borrowed the device from Gregory Markopoulos [see Success and New Ambitions p. 441].) A puzzling flashforward shot of a burning bike punctuates the narrative, foreshadowing the end of the drug dealers' odyssey.

Other *road movies* took a loose, open approach to narrative, as in Bob Rafelson's *Five Easy Pieces* and Monte Hellman's *Two Lane Blacktop* (1971), the latter remarkable for its sparse dialogue and minimal characterizations. Brian De Palma's *Greetings* and *Hi, Mom!* (1970) were episodic counterculture films that merged rock music, raunchy humor, and reflexive stylistic devices borrowed from François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. Haskell Wexler's *Medium Cool* (1969; **22.12**), Paul Williams's *The Revolutionary* (1970), and Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970) drew upon the critical political cinema emerging in Europe (Chapter 23); they often relied on ambiguous narratives and open endings. Melvin Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), a frenetic call to Black revolution, exploited a variety of New Wave techniques. Hopper's *The Last Movie* (1971), about a Kansas cowboy eking out a living in Peru, employed cryptic symbolic

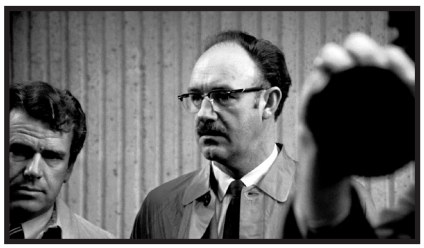
Medium Cool

22.12 The handheld camera captures demonstrators building barricades against the police in sequences shot at the 1968 Democratic Convention (*Medium Cool*).

scenes and a pervasive reflexivity (including titles reading "SCENE MISSING").

Older directors also ventured into the American art cinema. Paul Mazursky's *Alex in Wonderland* (1970) paid homage to Fellini's *8½*, while Sydney Pollack's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1969) flaunted stylized flashforwards. Mike Nichols's *Catch-22* (1970) and George Roy Hill's *Slaughterhouse Five* (1972) juggled time in adapting well-known novels. In *Images* (1972) and *Three Women* (1977), Altman emphasized ambiguous shifts between objective reality and character subjectivity, decorated with abstract, enigmatic compositions. Woody Allen's *Interiors* (1978) was a somber chamber drama modeled on Bergman's work, while Alan J. Pakula's *The Parallax View* (1972) adorned an assassination thriller with alienating widescreen compositions that recall Antonioni (**Color Plate 22.5**).

The auteur approach to film criticism had become widely known in the United States. Many movie brats who began their careers in the 1960s had learned of it in film school and harbored dreams of becoming artists like the venerated European and Asian auteurs and Young Cinema directors.



22.13 *The Conversation*: as Harry watches the mysterious younger people leave the corporation under press scrutiny . . .

22.14 . . . Coppola interrupts the scene with glimpses of the murder . . .

22.15 . . . and suggests that these images could be either Harry's imaginings or fragments of the real action.

The most celebrated movie brat was Francis Ford Coppola. With *The Rain People* (1969), shot on the road with a Dodge bus, a crew of friends, and minuscule financing, Coppola sought to make a film that had the stylistic richness and the dedramatization of prestigious European cinema. Natalie leaves her husband because her marriage is beginning to stifle her. On her aimless drive she picks up Killer, a brain-damaged football player. Abrupt, jagged flashbacks interrupt scenes, and Coppola's sound designer, Walter Murch, provides a montage of environmental textures—the crackle of phone lines, the muffled rumble of high-speed trucks shaking roadside motel rooms. The glistening sidewalks of the opening credits take on significance when Killer tells Natalie of the "rain people" who disappear because "they cry themselves away."

Coppola's most ambitious art film was *The Conversation* (1974), financed on the success of *The Godfather*. Like many of Altman's works (see Personal Cinema: Altman and Allen box), the film blends conventions of the art cinema with those of a Hollywood genre—in this case, the detective film. Although *The Conversation* is frequently compared to Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), Coppola probes his protagonist's mind far more deeply than Antonioni does. Harry Caul, an expert in audio surveillance, records fragments of a conversation that lead him to suspect a murder plot. As he replays and remixes the telltale dialogue (rendered in Walter Murch's intricate sound design), Harry's growing anxiety is charted through dreams and fragmentary flashbacks (**Video 22.1**). The murder is presented in disorienting shards, as Harry glimpses and overhears it. Eventually, the audience discovers that parts of the original conversation have been filtered through Harry's mind. As Harry realizes the true situation, Coppola intercuts shots of him with shots of the murder, perhaps as he now imagines it to have taken place (**22.13–22.15**).

Hollywood Strikes Gold

During the 1970s, forces were at work to salvage the US film industry. In 1971, a new law allowed film companies to claim tax credits on investments in US-made films and to recover tax credits from the 1960s. This legislation not only returned hundreds of millions of dollars to the Majors, it also allowed them to defer tax on subsidiaries' activities. In addition, a tax-shelter plan allowed investors in films to declare up to 100 percent of their investment as exempt from taxes. The latter provision helped successful, offbeat films such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) and *Taxi Driver* (1976) to be made. The tax-shelter provision was rescinded in 1976, and the studios' tax-credit benefits were abolished in the mid-1980s, but they had been crucial to the industry's recovery.

Although many of the new generation of Hollywood directors—especially the movie brats—considered themselves artists, few wanted to be esoteric. Some made not just ordinary hits but films that broke records year after year. The top-grossing films of 1970 and 1971 (*Love Story*, *Airport*, *M*A*S*H*, *Patton*, *The French Connection*, *Fiddler on the Roof*) had each yielded between $25 million and $50 million at the box-office—strong showings, but lackluster in comparison with what was to come. *The Godfather* ushered in an era of box-office income on a scale no one had imagined. The following figures are rentals, not box-office grosses; the rentals are the revenues returned to the studio after the theaters have taken their percentages of gross ticket sales.

1972: *The Godfather*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, returned more than $81 million to Paramount in the US market. Two years later, its global rentals and TV sales amounted to $285 million.

PERSONAL CINEMA: ALTMAN AND ALLEN

After the mid-1970s, efforts to maintain a Hollywood art cinema were much less common. One director who persisted was Robert Altman. Altman directed some fairly orthodox features before his career was energized by the late 1960s recession, the youthpics cycle, and the vogue for Hollywood art cinema. His films travesty their genres, from the war film *M*A*S*H* to the antimusical *Popeye* (1980). They radiate a distrust of authority, a criticism of American pieties, and a celebration of energetic, if confused, idealism.

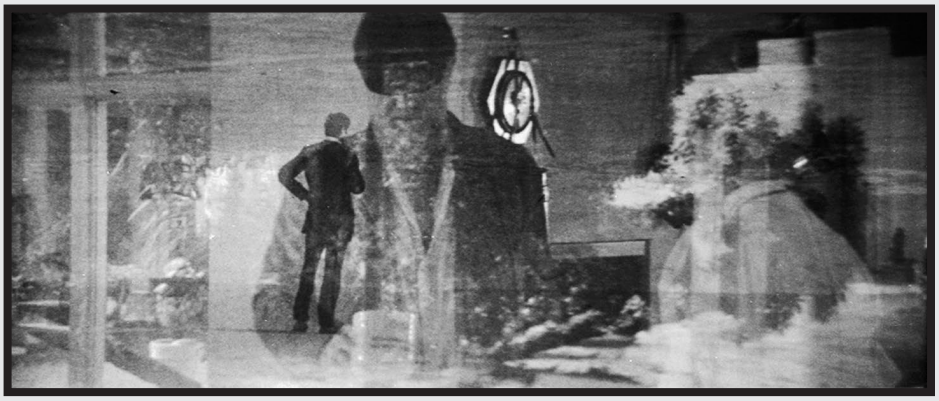
Altman also developed an idiosyncratic style. He relied on shambling, semi-improvised performances, a restless pan-and-zoom camera style, abrupt cutting, multiple-camera shooting that kept the viewpoint resolutely outside the character action, and a sound track of unprecedented density. His long lenses crowd characters in on one another and lock them behind reflecting glass (**22.16; Video 22.2**). *Nashville* (1975), for many critics Altman's major achievement, follows twenty-four characters over a weekend, often scattering them across the widescreen frame (**Color Plate 22.6**). In Altman's films, characters mumble, talk simultaneously, or find themselves drowned out by the droning loudspeakers of official wisdom.

Without a major hit after *M*A*S*H*, Altman found himself adrift in the 1980s, but he still managed to be quite prolific, skewering American values in bare-bones play adaptations (*Secret Honor*, 1984; *Fool for Love*, 1985). His career was revived by the dark Hollywood comedy *The Player* (1992), which returned him to more mainstream production. Venerated by a new generation of US independent filmmakers, Altman continued his experiments in decentered narrative and sardonic social commentary in *Short Cuts* (1993), *Gosford Park* (2001), and many other works. His last film before his death, A *Prairie Home Companion* (2006), returned to the musical world of *Nashville*, but with a good-humored affection for the performers.

Altman's contemporary Woody Allen created a personal cinema from a production base in New York. A television gag writer and stand-up comedian, Allen wrote plays and starred in films during the 1960s. His first directorial effort, *Take the Money and Run* (1969), became an immediate success, carrying on the wisecracking absurdist tradition of the Marx Brothers and Bob Hope. Allen's early films also appealed to intellectuals through cinematic in-jokes, such as the homage to *Potemkin*'s Odessa Steps in *Bananas* (1971).

With *Annie Hall* (1977), Allen launched a series of films that blended his interest in the psychological problems of the urban professional with his love for American film traditions and for such European filmmakers as Fellini and Bergman. "When I started making pictures, I was interested in the kind of pictures I enjoyed when I was younger. Comedies, real funny comedies, and romantic comedies, sophisticated comedies. As I got a little more savvy, that part of me which responded to foreign film started to take over."[4]

Allen's most influential films have thrown his comic persona—the hypersensitive, insecure Jewish intellectual—into a tangle of psychological conflicts. Sometimes the plot centers on the Allen figure's confused love life (*Annie Hall*; *Manhattan*, 1979). In *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986) and *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1990), the plot consists of intertwined romantic relationships among several characters, played for contrasts between verbal comedy and sober drama (**22.17**). Allen built many of his films around the questions that preoccupied him, and he unabashedly recorded his loves (jazz, Manhattan),



The Long Goodbye

22.16 In *The Long Goodbye*, a dense window reflection shows the detective Philip Marlowe on the beach while inside the house novelist Roger Wade quarrels with his wife.

(continued)

PERSONAL CINEMA: ALTMAN AND ALLEN, continued

Hannah and Her Sisters

22.17 Middle-class couples debate artificial insemination: romantic satire in *Hannah and Her Sisters*.

dislikes (rock music, drugs, California), and values (love, friendship, trust).

A unique production arrangement allowed Allen to retain control over the script, casting, and editing. He explored a range of styles, from the pseudo-documentary realism of *Zelig* (1983) to the mock German Expressionism of *Shadows and Fog* (1992). Allen also paid homage to a number of his favorite films and auteurs. *Stardust Memories* (1980) is an overt reworking of Fellini's *8½*. *Interiors* (1978) and *September* (1987) are Bergmanesque chamber dramas, while the holiday family gatherings of *Hannah and Her Sisters* evoke *Fanny and Alexander*. Few of his films made a profit, but into the 2010s Allen attracted major stars willing to take roles in his personal universe. By the early 2020s, though, renewed attention to allegations of sexual abuse left his future projects in doubt.

1973: William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (Warners; **22.18**) surpassed *The Godfather*'s US rentals by $3 million. In the same year, Universal reluctantly released a small-budget film called *American Graffiti*, directed by George Lucas; it reaped more than $55 million in rentals.

1975: *Jaws* (Universal), directed by Steven Spielberg, earned $130 million in domestic rentals.

1976: *Rocky*, made without major stars and by little-known director John G. Avildsen, earned United Artists $56 million in domestic rentals.

1977: Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Columbia; $82 million) and John Badham's *Saturday Night Fever* (Paramount; $74 million) generated very healthy profits, but records were broken again by George Lucas's *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (Fox). Costing $11 million, it began as a summer movie, ran continuously into 1978, and was rereleased in 1979. *Star Wars* earned more than $190 million in US rentals and about $250 million worldwide, on a total ticket sales of more than $500 million.

No cluster of films had ever made so much money on initial release.[5] Studios on the brink of bankruptcy found their profits hitting unprecedented levels. Richard F. Zanuck, the son of long-time 20th Century-Fox boss

The Exorcist

22.18 *The Exorcist*, an adaptation of a best-selling horror novel, aroused controversy with its blasphemous language and its shocking special effects. Here, thanks to a life-sized puppet, the possessed Regan mockingly rotates her head.

Darryl F. Zanuck, produced *The Sting* and *Jaws*. He realized that "I had amassed more money with one or two pictures than my father had in a lifetime of work."[6] During the boom of the early and mid-1970s, most Majors had at least one top hit, so the industry maintained its stability. Overall rentals from domestic and foreign release increased about $200 million per year, reaching $2 billion in 1979. Television networks and cable companies began paying large sums for rights to broadcast the new blockbusters. The 1970s resurgence catapulted several filmmakers to fame, with three becoming major producer-directors (see The 1970s Big Three: Coppola, Spielberg, and Lucas box).

The Return of the Blockbuster

The 1970s blockbusters made producers far less willing to let filmmakers experiment with plot, tone, and style. During the recession of the early 1970s, studios welcomed even a small hit; directors were not expected to create big pictures. By the late 1970s, however, companies did not want to risk money on untried subjects or approaches.

Clearly, the industry's success was based on very few films. In any year, ten or so "must-see" pictures attracted the bulk of admissions, while most of the Majors' releases lost money. The industry therefore sought to minimize the risks. Companies released their big-budget films in the peak leisure periods, summer and Christmas. Copying exploitation companies like AIP (see Exploitation p. 297), Universal aired many television ads for *Jaws* and released the film to hundreds of theaters simultaneously. Since then, most major releases have received saturation advertising and booking, pinning their fates primarily on one opening weekend.

Hollywood discovered other ways to wring profits from blockbusters. One strategy would be central to future studio filmmaking: the sequel. *The Godfather*, *The Exorcist*, *Jaws*, and *Rocky* were given additional installments; one *Rocky* sequel appeared in 2015, forty years after the original. George Lucas built the idea of a continuing story into *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, and his empire depended on sequels, prequels, and offshoot films. This practice would lead producers to set up *franchises*, ongoing stories spread across many films over many years. Another strategy pioneered by Lucas involved ancillary rights. In negotiating his stake in *Star Wars*, Lucas shrewdly obtained a large percentage of the rights to toys, T-shirts, and other fan paraphernalia. After studios saw the *Star Wars* ancillary income exceed its box-office take, they created their own merchandising divisions.

Despite some inroads made by independent distributors, the market was ruled by familiar players. The major distribution companies garnered 90 percent of all theater revenues. A film financed outside the studios could not get widely screened unless it was distributed by a top company. The standard distribution fee, 35 percent, came directly from gross rentals, so *Jaws* and *Star Wars* earned distribution income for Universal and 20th Century-Fox over and above any investments the studios made in the productions. The major distributors also controlled international circulation of US films.

Still, the Majors needed filmmakers. While some studios, notably Disney, prided themselves on generating their own projects, most came to rely on directors and producers with strong track records. Spielberg and Lucas became powerful producers who could find financing easily and even demand reductions in distribution fees. Studios cultivated long-term relationships with producers who could bring together a script, a director, and stars. Increasingly, agents functioned as quasi-producers by gathering their clients into packages, a tactic pioneered by Lew Wasserman (see Mainstream Independents: Agents, Star Power, and the Package p. 295). In 1975, two powerful talent agencies formed, International Creative Management and Creative Artists Agency, both of which would become prime packagers in the 1980s.

Many of the most adept moguls were TV-trained, such as Paramount's Barry Diller and Michael Eisner, and knew how to broker talent. Studios also hired agents as executives. Accordingly, the 1970s initiated the era of "the deal." *Development deals* generated income for the agents, producers, scriptwriters, and stars, but few films resulted. *Overall deals* paid stars and directors to develop "vanity projects" for studios, and *housekeeping deals* gave their production companies an office on the studio lot. Every participant in a package held out for the maximum, so a project might take years to reach the screen. Filmmakers complained that shooting films had become secondary to deal-making.

As successful filmmakers gained more control over their projects, budgets often inflated. Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* took three years to shoot and cost more than $30 million. Even top directors were not immune to cost overruns, as Spielberg's *1941* (1979) showed. The system's most notorious failure involved Michael Cimino's ambitious Western, *Heaven's Gate* (1980). The budget rose to $40 million, the highest production cost of the 1970s. After the film had a disastrous premiere, United Artists released a shortened version. It earned less than $2 million in rentals, and soon UA collapsed as a Major, eventually to be absorbed by MGM.

THE 1970s BIG THREE: COPPOLA, SPIELBERG, AND LUCAS

Three directors who emerged at the beginning of the 1970s became powerful producers and redefined what Hollywood cinema might be. Like other novices of the time, they had tried their hand at every aspect of the craft, from writing to postproduction. They understood movies as total creations and sought to put their personal stamp on everything they did. They were also well acquainted with each other. Francis Ford Coppola acted as producer and mentor for George Lucas on *American Graffiti*. Lucas and Steven Spielberg collaborated on several projects, notably *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1980). Still, their paths diverged. With *The Godfather*, Coppola proved that he could turn out a mainstream masterpiece, but he wanted to go further, to turn Hollywood into a center of artistic cinema. Lucas and Spielberg wanted to modernize the system without disturbing it.

Coppola broke through first. His youth comedy *You're a Big Boy Now* (1967) borrowed the flashy techniques of Richard Lester's Beatles films and the swinging-London pictures. Coppola came to know the collapsing studio system from the inside, moving from Corman's American International Pictures to screenwriting (the Oscar-winning script for *Patton*, 1970) and then to directing, with the musical *Finian's Rainbow* (1968). *The Godfather* yielded him great financial rewards, but instead of parlaying his success into a commercial career, he plunged into an intimate, ambivalent art movie, *The Conversation*. He turned *The Godfather, Part II* (1974) into a complex, time-juggling piece. Then he embarked on the vast, exhausting, budget-shattering *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

Coppola's was bravura filmmaking on a grand scale. In college he wanted to direct theater, and in many respects he remained an actor's director. For *The Godfather* he fought Paramount to hire Marlon Brando and Al Pacino and gave prime roles to James Caan, Robert Duvall, Talia Shire, and other little-known actors. During rehearsals he had actors improvise scenes that would not be in the film, and he held dinners in which the actors stayed in character. For *The Godfather, Part II* he added New York stage legends such as playwright Michael Gazzo and Lee Strasberg, the dean of the Actors Studio.

This interest in performance was balanced by a risk-taking cinematic sensibility. *The Godfather* was remarkably poised, partly because it refused the fast cutting and camera movements of the early 1970s. Coppola and his cinematographer, Gordon Willis, settled upon a style that emphasized a static camera and actors moving through rich, often gloomy, interiors (**Color Plate 22.7**). In contrast, the fragmentary montage of sound and image in *The Conversation* sets the audience adrift in alternative times and mental spaces. In *Apocalypse Now*, Coppola would strive to give the Vietnam War an overpowering presence, with psychedelic color, surround sound, and slow, hallucinatory dissolves.

Coppola had founded his company, American Zoetrope, in 1969 in order to nurture his personal projects. He bought the Hollywood General studio in 1979, renamed it Zoetrope Studios, and announced that it would be a center of new technology for feature films, an "electronic cinema" based on high-definition video sent out by satellite. He rebuilt the stages and directed performances from his trailer via video feeds. The main result was *One from the Heart* (1982), a flamboyantly artificial musical drama filled with stunning pictorial effects (**Color Plate 22.8**). *One from the Heart* would influence the French *cinéma du look* of the 1980s (See France: The Cinéma du Look p. 561), but the cost overruns and public indifference led to massive failure. Soon Coppola was forced to sell his facility to satisfy his creditors.

What followed were decades of difficulty. Coppola launched some intriguing projects such as the teenage dramas *The Outsiders* (1983) and *Rumble Fish* (1983), as well as the brash *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988, produced by Lucas). He never ceased to experiment with eye-catching compositions (**22.19**) and offbeat storytelling

Tucker

22.19 *Tucker*: an in-camera optical effect connects Tucker with his wife as they talk on the phone.

techniques, such as the use of a fake publicity film in *Tucker* and the silent-film-style special effects in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992). Yet he failed to restart his career. Even *Godfather III* (1990), a sequel to his biggest hit, did not redeem him, and he became a director for hire. Coppola began to be known not for his movies but for the wine cultivated at his Napa Valley vineyard.

By contrast, Lucas and Spielberg sought to recover their boyhood pleasure in movies. They tried to recreate the uncomplicated fun of space opera (*Star Wars*), action-packed serials (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*), and fantasy (*Close Encounters, E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, 1982). In making *Star Wars*, Lucas pulled together the most exciting portions of several air battles from Hollywood combat pictures, storyboarded the compiled sequence, and then shot his space dogfights to match the older footage. As producers, Lucas and Spielberg revived the family film of adventure (*Willow*, 1988) and cartoon comedy (*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, 1988; **Color Plate 22.9**). While the Disney studio was floundering, two baby boomers recaptured the old magic. Many critics noted that Walt himself would have loved to make *Star Wars* or *E.T.*

Spielberg divided his attention between what he called "fast-food movies" (*Jaws*, the Indiana Jones series) and more upscale directorial efforts (*The Color Purple*, 1985; *Empire of the Sun*, 1987). These dignified adaptations of best-selling novels had a nostalgic side, too, recalling the Hollywood prestige picture of the 1930s and 1940s. Looking back to the great tradition, Spielberg filled his films with reverent allusions to the studio program picture (*Always*, 1989, is a remake of Victor Fleming's *A Guy Named Joe*, 1943) and to Disney (*Close Encounters*; *Hook*, 1991; and *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*, 2001).

In one respect, Spielberg proved himself heir to the studio directors. With the right material, he could make a story come grippingly alive for his audience. *Jaws* balanced thrills with a skeptical attitude toward political leadership. Against the money-grubbing businesspeople of Amity, the film offers three versions of male heroism: the grizzled man of action Quint, the scientific rationalist Hooper, and the reluctant pragmatist Sheriff Brody. Each sequence hits a high pitch of emotional tension, and scene by scene the audience's anxiety is ratcheted up through crisp editing, John Williams's ominous score, and inventive Panavision compositions (**22.20**). Likewise, in the Indiana Jones and *Jurassic Park* series, Spielberg revamped the traditions of Raoul Walsh and Ray Harryhausen for the blockbuster age.

Spielberg's New Age-tinted spirituality, often expressed as mute wonder at glittering technological marvels, proved no less popular. Over and over the young man from divorced suburban parents replayed the drama of a family's breakup and a child's yearning for happiness. He found emblematic images—spindly aliens communicating through music, a boy bicycling silhouetted against the moon—that verged on kitsch but also struck a chord in millions. Spielberg became New Hollywood's reliable showman, recalling Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock, and the director whom he claimed he most resembled, Victor Fleming, the contract professional who had a hand in both *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Less of a movie fan than Coppola and Spielberg, Lucas spent his youth watching television, reading comic books, and tinkering with cars. He satisfied the industry's craving for teen pictures with *American Graffiti*, which lovingly depicted the world of cruising and rock'n'roll. But the meticulously designed music track and interwoven coming-of-age crises showed higher artistic ambitions, and critics recognized the film's homage to Fellini's *I Vitelloni* (19.28). *Star Wars* offered chivalric myth for 1970s teens, a quest romance in which young heroes could find adventure, pure love, and a sacred cause (**22.21**). Not

Jaws

22.20 Ingenious depth staging in Spielberg's *Jaws*.

(continued)

THE 1970s BIG THREE: COPPOLA, SPIELBERG, AND LUCAS, continued

surprisingly, *Star Wars* was published as a comic book before the film was released. Coppola loved working with actors, but Lucas avoided talking with them except for the occasional "Faster!" He looked forward to creating his scenes digitally, shooting isolated actors against blank screens, or creating characters wholly on a computer. This dream, the ultimate film extension of the comic-book aesthetic, was realized in the computer-generated Jar Jar Binks of *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (1999).

Lucas often called himself an independent filmmaker, and in some sense he was. The triumph of *Star Wars* allowed him to dictate terms to any studio in town. After frequent clashes with Fox on *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), which ran over schedule and budget, he vowed that he would never compromise again. Retreating to his own fiefdom, Skywalker Ranch, Lucas oversaw a high-tech wonderland based on a saga that gripped the imagination of millions around the world and spawned novels, toys, games, action figures, and video games. Skywalker staff maintained a volume, "The Bible," that listed all the events occurring in the *Star Wars* universe.

Yet Lucas continued to believe that he was spinning a simple tale grounded in basic human values. Like Spielberg, Lucas hit on a resonant New Age theme: the Force, representing God, the cosmos, or whatever the viewer was comfortable with. Beneath all the hardware, he claimed, *Star Wars* was about "redemption." Spielberg remarked, hyperbolically, that *Star Wars* marked the moment "when the world recognized the value of childhood."[7]

All three directors had colossal hits in the 1970s, but only Spielberg and Lucas continued to rule over the next forty years. At one point in the early 1980s, the pair were responsible for the six top-grossing films of the postwar period. Coppola foresaw the multimedia future but believed that Zoetrope Studios could become a vertically integrated firm on its own. His ambition outstripped his business sense, however, as his plan proved futile in a world ruled by agency packages, producer pacts, and franchises.

Lucas and Spielberg saw deeper, letting the studios remain distributors while they provided content and services. Lucasfilm and LucasArts created theatrical films, television series, commercials, and interactive games. Lucas's Industrial Light & Magic pioneered the use of computer graphics in film, becoming the gold standard for visual effects and computer animation as well as new editing and sound systems. Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment produced some of the era's most popular films (*Back to the Future*, 1985; *Twister*, 1996). Later, by partnering with music mogul David Geffen and former Disney executive Jeffrey Katzenberg, Spielberg realized Coppola's ambition of forming a new studio, Dreamworks SKG. Focusing on US distribution, the company produced and released almost eighty titles between 1997 and 2009 before eventually reverting back to being a content provider for the Majors. By 1980, Lucas and Spielberg had become the most powerful director-producers in the industry, and they remained at the top into the new century.

Star Wars

22.21 The heroes of *Star Wars* rewarded.

Studio executives complained that every young director wanted to be an auteur, free of financial constraints. Ironically, the rise of the New Hollywood, a director-based trend, led to a mistrust of directors. In the 1980s, studios strained to keep filmmakers on track. Executives provided notes on scripts and rushes, and test screenings sampled audiences' reactions to the director's cut.

A new era of blockbusters, built on packages and deals and bolstered by stars and special effects, had begun. *Superman: The Movie* (1978) was two years in the making.

This independently produced film wound up costing somewhere between $40 million and $55 million. Gene Hackman demanded a salary of $2 million, and Marlon Brando received $3 million for two weeks' work. Mario Puzo, author of *The Godfather*, was paid $350,000 for the *Superman* script plus 5 percent of the gross receipts. Millions more were invested in the elaborate sets and special effects, prepared at England's Pinewood Studios. Aware of the value of a franchise series, the producers shot two films in one stretch of studio time so as to have a sequel ready. The film featured a score by the certified mega-hit composer John Williams (*Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters*). Released in December, *Superman: The Movie* eventually grossed more than $80 million in its US run, becoming the top release of 1979 and Warner Bros.' most profitable film to date. It spawned three sequels and millions in merchandising, along the way spurring new interest in superhero comic books. Directed by Richard Donner, a man without auteurist pretensions, it pointed the way to the *expanded blockbuster* strategy of the 1980s and 1990s (see The Blockbuster Mentality p. 647).

Hollywood Updated

No 1970s studio could afford to concentrate completely on big-budget pictures. Each firm made only two or three of these per year. But since the studio's distribution wing needed from twelve to twenty pictures each year to pay for itself, the rest of the program was filled out with less costly items—often, genre fare revamped for young audiences. Comedy was pushed toward gross-out slapstick by directors and performers associated with *National Lampoon* magazine and television's *Saturday Night Live* in *Animal House* (1978). Musicals were updated to incorporate disco (*Saturday Night Fever*, 1977) or to playfully mock 1950s teen culture (*Grease*, 1978). The kind of doomed romance seen in George Cukor's *A Star is Born* (1954) was explored in *New York, New York* (1977), which signaled its awareness of tradition by featuring Liza Minnelli, the daughter of the earlier film's star Judy Garland.

Now that simply updating genres occasionally provided hits, many directors steered away from the experimentation encouraged by the art-cinema vogue of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most young directors did not try to challenge mainstream storytelling. Instead, they followed Spielberg and Lucas in reworking established genres and referencing hallowed classics and directors. In several ways, the New Hollywood defined itself by remaking the old. "We were very much concerned with making the Hollywood film," recalled director John Milius, "not to make a lot of money, but as artists."[8]

Many films became ironic or affectionate tributes to the studio tradition. John Carpenter's *Assault on Precinct 13* updates Hawks's *Rio Bravo*, pitting a stoic code of conduct against contemporary urban violence. Brian De Palma became famous for his pastiches of Hitchcock: *Obsession* (1976) is *Vertigo* with an incestuous twist; *Dressed to Kill* (1980) confronts *Psycho* with contemporary sexual mores. Milius revived the swashbuckling action film in *The Wind and the Lion* (1975). These directors often cultivated a style that borrowed from the masters. Carpenter's rhythmic cutting in *Assault on Precinct 13* is indebted to Hawks's *Scarface*. De Palma's overhead shots, startling deep-focus imagery, and split-screen handling of action recall Hitchcock's swaggering ingenuity. In *Jaws*, Spielberg borrowed Hitchcock's zoom-in/track-out technique from *Vertigo*, a device that was to be used commonly in 1980s film to show a background eerily squeezing around an unmoving figure.

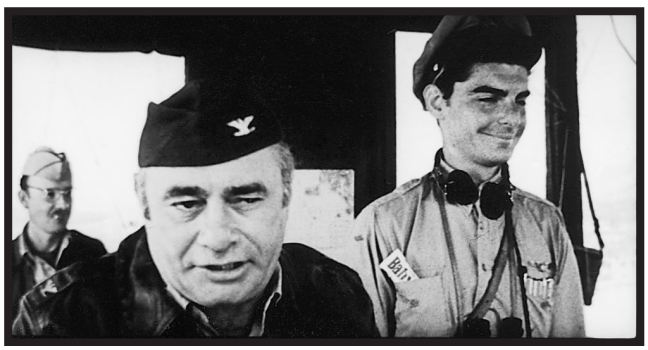
During the late 1960s and early 1970s, directors had become reliant on long lenses; entire scenes might be shot with the depth-flattening telephoto. By contrast, Spielberg, De Palma, and other New Hollywood directors reintroduced wide-angle-lens compositions reminiscent of Orson Welles, William Wyler, and film noir. The results were often striking depth of focus and distortion of figures (**22.22**, **22.23**). Yet directors did not abandon long lenses. From the

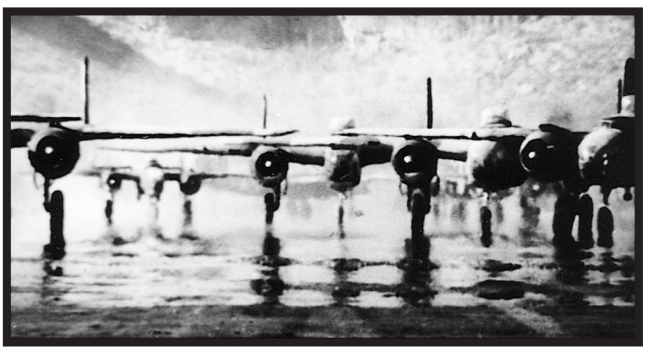
Close Encounters of the Third Kind

22.22 The return of wide-angle shots: *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Mean Streets

22.23 Debt collecting in Little Italy: the "mook" scene from *Mean Streets*.





Catch-22

22.24, 22.25 In *Catch-22* (1970), Mike Nichols intercuts exaggerated deep-focus shots with images taken with a much longer lens.

1970s onward, they mixed occasional deep-focus shots with flatter telephoto shots (**22.24**, **22.25**). As the films' scripts often updated 1940s and 1950s genres, so their style became a synthesis of techniques derived from many eras.

Several films of the New Hollywood revisited traditional genres. *The Godfather* movies revived the classic gangster film but gave the formula some fresh twists. *The Godfather* (1972) emphasizes the genre's conventional ethnic divisions (Italian/Irish/Jewish/WASP) and its machismo values but adds a new stress on family unity and generational succession. Michael Corleone, at first remote from the "family business," becomes his father's rightful heir, at the cost of distancing himself from his wife Kay. *The Godfather, Part II* (1974) shows how Michael's father became a success, harking back to another genre formula, the immigrant gangster's rise to power. This earlier time period is intercut with Michael's expanding authority and ruthlessness in the 1950s. Although the first *Godfather* ends with Michael's full assimilation into the male line of the family, *Part II* closes with him locked in autumnal shadow, alone and brooding, unable to trust anyone.

The Godfather did not lead to a renaissance of the gangster film, but two other genres were revived on a major scale. The horror film, long associated with low-budget exploitation, was given new respectability in *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *The Exorcist*. Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) spawned a long cycle of stalker-slasher films in which the victims, usually voluptuous teenagers, meet gory ends. Adaptations of best-selling novels by Steven King yielded *Carrie* (1976, De Palma) and *The Shining* (1980, Stanley Kubrick). Thanks to its relatively modest budgets and a loyal core audience, the horror film remained an industry mainstay for decades to come.

The other significant genre to be revived was science fiction. Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* was the major forerunner, but it was Lucas and Spielberg who impressed Hollywood with the profit possibilities of a genre previously identified with kiddie matinees and teenage exploitation. *Star Wars* showed that space adventure, mounted with updated special effects, could attract a new generation of moviegoers, and its unprecedented success triggered not only its own film series but one based on the television program

Star Trek. *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* turned the 1950s "invasion film" into a cozy, quasi-mystical experience of communion with extraterrestrial wisdom. After these films, science fiction would remain a dominant Hollywood genre, often as a showcase for new filmmaking technology.

The young directors acquired a taste for tradition from film school or late-night TV, but an older figure gained it more spontaneously. Starting as a studio contract player, Clint Eastwood moved from movie bit-parts to a successful 1960s television series (*Rawhide*) and then to movie stardom in Sergio Leone's spaghetti Westerns (see Italy: Young Cinema and Spaghetti Westerns p. 398). Returning to Hollywood, Eastwood deepened his star image in veteran action director Don Siegel's *Coogan's Bluff* (1968) and *Dirty Harry* (1972). Eastwood's screen persona had a cynical, even sadistic, cast that set him apart from Paul Newman and John Wayne, his main box-office rivals. He began directing with *Play Misty for Me* (1971), casting himself as a disc jockey stalked by an obsessive fan. Eastwood directed conventional action fare such as *The Eiger Sanction* (1975), but he also brought a sour, mythic feel to the Western in *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976) and experimented with his image in *The Gauntlet* (1977) and *Bronco Billy* (1980). He shrewdly starred in other directors' genre efforts, which gave him big hits such as *Any Which Way But Loose* (1978).

Eastwood shot his films fast and cheap, a process that yielded solid profits but sometimes made them look staid in an age of hyper-produced extravaganzas. Yet he became one of Hollywood's most respected directors. He worked in nearly every genre, from war film (*Heartbreak Ridge*, 1986; *American Sniper*, 2014) and crime dramas (*Mystic River*, 2003) to biographical sagas such as *Bird* (1988), a testament to his love of jazz, and *J. Edgar* (2011). He revived the Western with *Unforgiven* (1992) and even made a musical (*Jersey Boys*, 2014). His versatility, along with his unemphatic style, made critics call him the last classical studio director, but his work did have an adventurous side. He tried unconventional drama in *Million Dollar Baby* (2004) and *Hereafter* (2010), and his paired Iwo Jima films *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (both 2006) offered complementary perspectives on warrior cultures East and West. Although he was known as a conservative, *Gran Turino* (2008) was a pungent commentary on forces that would deny immigrants a place in America. Perhaps Eastwood's ultimate commitment was to the solitary man of any political persuasion who, despite flaws and guilt, persists in doing his duty. And although Eastwood's work is marbled with violence, his tribute to the heroic pilot of *Sully* (2016) resonates because, as one rescue worker puts it, "Today, nobody dies."

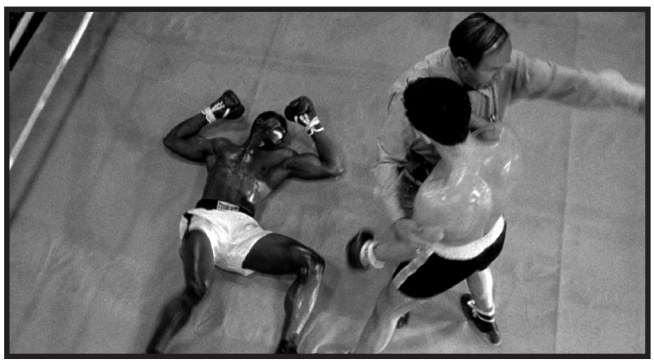
Eastwood's calm craftsmanship seemed distinctly unhip alongside the satires and parodies pouring out of the studios in the 1970s. Woody Allen mocked the caper film (*Take the Money and Run*, 1969) and the science-fiction film (*Sleeper*, 1973). Mel Brooks made raucous, bawdy parodies of the Western (*Blazing Saddles*, 1973), the Universal horror film (*Young Frankenstein*, 1974), the Hitchcockian thriller (*High Anxiety*, 1977), and the historical epic (*History of the World, Part I*, 1981). David and Jerry Zucker, along with Jim Abrahams, savaged the disaster film in *Airplane!* (1980). Such zany treatment of genre conventions had already been employed in silent slapstick and in the comedies of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby and Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. Mocking Hollywood was itself a Hollywood tradition.

Scorsese as Synthesis

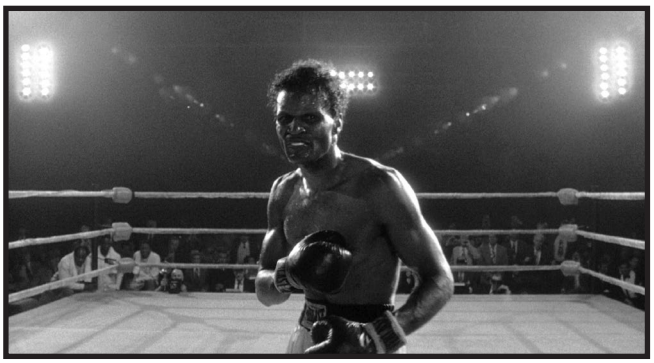
A few filmmakers managed to express personal concerns by adapting aspects of the European art film, and several more did so by reviving the studio tradition. Very few, however, were able to do both. Coppola managed for a time, but Martin Scorsese blended both possibilities more consistently. Brought up on Hollywood features, Italian Neorealism, and "Million Dollar Movie" TV broadcasts, Scorsese studied filmmaking at New York University. He made an underground reputation with several shorts and two low-budget features before his *Mean Streets* (1973) drew wide attention. *Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More* (1974) and *Taxi Driver* propelled him to fame. *Raging Bull* (1980), a biography of prizefighter Jake LaMotta, won still greater notice; many critics consider it the finest American film of the 1980s. Scorsese's later films (notably *King of Comedy*, 1982; *The Last Temptation of Christ*, 1988; *GoodFellas*, 1990) cemented his reputation as the most critically acclaimed American director of his generation.

As a movie brat, Scorsese was heavily indebted to the Hollywood tradition. *Taxi Driver* was scored by Bernard Herrmann, Hitchcock's composer, and, as preparation for shooting *New York, New York*, Scorsese studied 1940s Hollywood musicals. Later, with *Cape Fear* (1991), he would remake a classic thriller. Like Altman and Allen, however, he was also influenced by European cinema. A shot change in *Raging Bull* was as likely to derive from Godard as from George Stevens's *Shane*, and the exploration of Rupert Pupkin's world in *King of Comedy* creates a Felliniesque ambiguity about what is real and what is fantasy.

Scorsese's film-consciousness also emerges in his virtuoso displays of technique. Alongside intense, aggressive dialogue scenes designed to highlight the skills of performers such as Robert De Niro, there are scenes of physical action served up with dazzling camera flourishes. These action sequences are often abstract and wordless, built out of



Raging Bull



22.26, 22.27 Two different fights in *Raging Bull*, one objective, the other subjective from Jake's point of view.

hypnotic imagery: a yellow cab gliding through hellishly steamy streets (*Taxi Driver*; **Color Plate 22.10**), billiard balls ricocheting across a pool table (*The Color of Money*, 1986). Each of the boxing scenes in *Raging Bull* is staged and filmed differently (**22.26**, **22.27**). Whereas other movie brats created spectacle through high-tech special effects, Scorsese engaged the viewer by a bold, idiosyncratic style.

Like Allen's films, Scorsese's had strong autobiographical undercurrents. *Mean Streets* drew on his Italian American youth (see 22.23). After years of self-destructive behavior, he felt ready to tackle *Raging Bull*: "I understood then what Jake was, but only after having gone through a similar experience. I was just lucky that there happened to be a project there ready for me to express this."[9] Perhaps as a result of his emotional absorption in his stories, Scorsese's films center on driven, even obsessed, protagonists, and his technique often puts us firmly in their minds. Rapid point-of-view shots, slow-motion imagery, and subjective sound heighten our identification with the prizefighter Jake LaMotta, the taxi driver Travis Bickle, and the aspiring stand-up comedian Rupert Pupkin (**22.28**). Like Eastwood, Scorsese continued his career into the 2010s, usually pursuing a "one for them, one for me" principle. He was willing to work for hire (*The Aviator*, 2004; *Shutter Island*, 2010) in order to realize projects to which he had an almost sacramental devotion (*Gangs of New York*, 2002; *Silence*, 2016). His flamboyant technique could energize both a staid historical drama (*The Age of Innocence*, 1993) and a tabloid saga of American excess (*The Wolf of Wall Street*, 2013).

As Scorsese had paid homage to masters he admired, younger filmmakers signaled their debt to his work. *The Lion King* (1994) includes a dialogue reference to the "Are you talking to me?" scene from *Taxi Driver.* David O. Russell's *American Hustle* (2013) mimics a *Goodfellas* shot from inside a car trunk, while that film's famous Copacabana long take is slavishly recreated in *Swingers* (1996). Todd Phillips's *Joker* (2019) merges aspects of the comic-book origin story with elements drawn from *Taxi Driver* and *The King of Comedy*.

King of Comedy

22.28 Aspiring talk-show host Rupert Pupkin interviews cardboard cut-outs of Liza Minnelli and Jerry Lewis in his basement (*King of Comedy*).

For fifty years, Scorsese showed that a filmmaker could skillfully blend experimental impulses, personal vision, and the respect for traditional Hollywood craftmanship that characterized the 1970s. In doing so, he became a venerated figure for several generations of directors—and movie lovers.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDEPENDENTS

The difficulties and recovery of the Majors were bound up with the fate of independent production in the United States during this period. The 1948 Paramount decision and the rise of the teenage market gave independent companies such as Allied Artists and American International Pictures (AIP) an entry into the low-budget market (See Exploitation p. 297).

During the late 1960s, the low-budget independents grew stronger, partly through the relaxing of the Production Code and partly through the decline of the Majors.

22.29 With *Night of the Living Dead*, Romero pioneered the low-budget horror film, often shot with friends playing walk-on monster roles. The genre would be a mainstay of independent filmmaking from the 1970s onward.

With the slackening of censorship controls, the 1960s saw growth in erotic exploitation. "Nudies" surfaced from the 16 mm "stag film" world and could be seen in decaying picture palaces in America's downtown neighborhoods. Eroticism became mixed with gore in Herschell Gordon Lewis's *Blood Feast* (1963) and *2000 Maniacs* (1964). Russ Meyer began in nudies before discovering his idiosyncratic blend of hammering editing, gruesome violence, and wildly overblown sex scenes (*Motorpsycho*, 1965; *Faster Pussycat, Kill! Kill!*, 1966). Meyer films like *Vixen* (1968) blazed the trail for the mainstreaming of pornography in the 1970s.

The youthpics craze was fed by AIP's cycle of motorcycle-gang movies and *Wild in the Streets* (1968). The films of AIP's main director, Roger Corman, had a strong influence on young directors of the late 1960s, and AIP gave opportunities to Coppola, Scorsese, Bogdanovich, Milius, De Palma, Robert De Niro, and Jack Nicholson. The low-budget independent film *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), rejected by AIP as too gory, went on to become a colossal cult hit and launched the career of director George Romero (**22.29**).

During most of the 1970s as well, independent production proved a robust alternative to the Majors. As the studios cut back production, low-budget films helped fill the market. Firms began to specialize in certain genres—martial-arts, action pictures, erotic pictures (*sexploitation*). Films aimed at African Americans (*blaxploitation*) showcased young Black performers and, sometimes, Black creative personnel such as directors Gordon Parks, Sr. (*Shaft*, 1971) and Michael Schultz (*Cooley High*, 1975; *Car Wash*, 1976). Led by *Walking Tall* (1973) and *Macon County Line* (1974), Southern-fried docudramas (*hicksploitation*) became sleeper hits for drive-in circuits. In the wake of *Night of the Living Dead* and *The Exorcist*, the teenage horror market was tapped with films such as Tobe Hooper's grotesque *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) and John Carpenter's more sober and expensive *Halloween*. Corman's new company, New World Pictures, created cycles and trained new directors (Jonathan Demme, John Sayles, James Cameron).

In some venues, the cheaper films could find an audience denied to the glossier studio product. Sunn International discovered, to the Majors' surprise, that there was still a family audience who could be lured from the television set with wildlife adventures and quasi-religious documentaries. Tom Laughlin, the enterprising director-producer-star of *Billy Jack* (1971), showed that small-town viewers would still come to films that mixed sentiment, action, and populist themes. Meanwhile, teenagers and college students began flocking to outrageous movies like John Waters's *Pink Flamingos* (1974), which owed a large debt to underground film (Chapter 24). Theaters found that *midnight movies* would attract a young crowd; *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) and *Eraserhead* (1978) became profitable almost solely through such shows.

The Majors responded by absorbing the sensational elements that had given independent films their edge. Big-budget films became more sexually explicit, and for a time Russ Meyer, exploiter of erotica, worked for 20th Century-Fox (*Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, 1970). *The Exorcist* traded on blasphemy and visceral disgust to a new degree. *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters* absorbed elements of low-budget science fiction (*Silent Running*, 1971; *Dark Star*, 1974), while *Alien* (1979) and other films reflected the new standards of gory violence established by independent directors such as Carpenter and David Cronenberg (*Shivers*, 1975; *Rabid*, 1977; *The Brood*, 1979). "'Exploitation' films were so named because you made a film about something wild with a great deal of action, a little sex, and possibly some sort of strange gimmick," wrote Corman. "[Later] the majors saw they could have enormous commercial success with big-budget exploitation films."[10]

Apart from the mass-market independents, there emerged a more artistically ambitious independent sector. New York sustained an "off-Hollywood" tendency. Shirley Clarke, known for her dance and experimental shorts, adapted the play *The Connection* (1962; **Video 22.3**) and made the semidocumentary *The Cool World* (1963). Jonas and Adolfas Mekas modeled *Guns of the Trees* (1961) and *Hallelujah the Hills* (1963) on the experiments of European new waves.

Shadows

22.30 The roughly shot beating of Ben (*Shadows*).

Faces

22.31 After joking and shouting, Jeannie, whom Frost has picked up in a bar, is distressed when he breaks down in tears. Soon she finds out that he's pretending (*Faces*).

John Cassavetes was the most famous member of this off-Hollywood group. A New York actor, Cassavetes made a career on the stage and in films and television. He scraped up donations to direct *Shadows* (1961). "The film you have just seen was an improvisation": this curt closing title announced Cassavetes's key aesthetic decision. The story, about two Black brothers and their sister in the New York jazz and party scene, was outlined in advance and the dramatic development of each scene was planned. During filming, however, the actors were free to create their own dialogue. Although shooting in a semidocumentary style, with a grimy, grainy look (**22.30**), Cassavetes also relied on deep-focus compositions and poetic interludes familiar from contemporary Hollywood cinema. *Shadows* won festival prizes and led Cassavetes to undertake a pair of ill-fated Hollywood projects. He returned to independent cinema, financing his films by acting in mainstream pictures, and became an emblematic figure for younger filmmakers.

Basing his aesthetic on a conception of raw realism, Cassavetes created a string of films featuring quasi-improvised performances and casual camerawork. *Faces* (1968) and *Husbands* (1970), with their sudden zooms to close-up and their search for revelatory detail, use Direct Cinema techniques to comment on the bleak disappointments and deceptions of middle-class American couples (**22.31**). Characteristically, his counterculture comedy *Minnie and Moskowitz* (1971) centers on the love affair of a middle-aged hippie and a lonely museum curator. In *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), *Opening Night* (1979), and *Love Streams* (1984), the drama alternates between mundane routines and painful outbursts that push each actor to near-hysterical limits. This spasmodic rhythm, and his focus on the anxieties underlying adult love and work, made Cassavetes's midlife melodramas seem experimental by 1970s and 1980s Hollywood standards.

The New York scene received a further burst of energy from Joan Micklin Silver's *Hester Street* (1975), a drama of Jewish life in late-nineteenth-century New York. Filmed for less than $500,000, it was released nationwide and earned more than $5 million. When it received an Academy Award nomination, the film sparked a new awareness of off-Hollywood filmmaking.

The independent impulse spread to regional filmmakers, who managed to make low-budget features centered on cultures seldom brought to the screen. John Waters revealed Baltimore as a campy Peyton Place (*Female Trouble*, 1975), while Victor Nuñez's *Gal Young 'Un* (1979) took place in Florida during the Depression. Another historical drama was John Hanson and Rob Nilsson's *Northern Lights* (1979), set in 1915 North Dakota during labor unrest. It won the best first-film award at the Cannes Film Festival.

Slowly, alternative venues were emerging for independent film. In addition to New York's Anthology Film Archive (founded in 1970), several festivals were established in Los Angeles (known as Filmex, 1971), Telluride, Colorado (1973), and Toronto and Seattle (1975), as well as the US Film Festival (1978), later known as Sundance. At the same time, enterprising filmmakers organized the Independent Feature Project (IFP) as an association of independent film artists. The IFP established, in 1979, the Independent Feature Film Market as a showcase for finished films and works in progress. The American independent cinema was poised for takeoff.

During the 1960s, the failing studios searched for new corporate identities and business models. After some winnowing, the 1970s set in place patterns that would dominate American film for the future. A new generation of moguls would partner with a new generation of producer-directors,

typified by Lucas and Spielberg, under the auspices of a conglomerate. The studios would concentrate on funding and making must-see movies. Alongside the expanding industry was an independent sector whose fortunes fluctuated but whose commitment to alternative stories and styles increased the diversity of US film culture.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Peter Bogdanovich, *Who the Devil Made It* (New York: Knopf, 1997), p. 250.
2. Quoted in Tag Gallagher, *John Ford: The Man and His Films* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), p. 437.
3. Quoted in Peter Cowie, *Coppola* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), p. 61.
4. Quoted in Eric Lax, *Woody Allen: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 255.
5. *Gone with the Wind* and the Disney animated classics had higher all-time returns, but they were rereleased at intervals over many years. Still, if rentals are adjusted for inflation, *Gone with the Wind* remains the highest-earning film of all time.
6. Quoted in Stephen M. Silverman, *The Fox That Got Away: The Last Days of the Zanuck Dynasty at Twentieth Century-Fox* (Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, 1988), p. 303.
7. Quoted in Bernard Weinraub, "Luke Skywalker Goes Home," in Sally Kline, ed., *George Lucas Interviews* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), p. 217.
8. Quoted in Michael Goodwin and Naomi Wise, *On the Edge: The Life and Times of Francis Coppola* (New York: Morrow, 1989), p. 30.
9. Quoted in David Thompson and Ian Christie, eds., *Scorsese on Scorsese* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), pp. 76–77.
10. Roger Corman and Jim Jerome, *How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime* (New York: Random House, 1990), p. 34.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

"Replay it again, Clint: Sully and the simulations"

"Who got played? A guest post by Jeff Smith on THE PLAYER"

"HUGO: Scorsese's birthday present to Georges Méliès"

"Scorsese, 'pressionist"

Reflections in a crystal eye

Captain Cinephilia: Scorsese strikes back

27.8 *A Brighter Summer Day*

27.9 *City of Sadness*

27.10 *Flowers of Shanghai*

27.11 *Mabarosi*

27.12 *Sonatine*

27.13 *Akira*

27.14 *My Neighbor Totoro*

27.15 *A Touch of Zen*

27.16 *Shanghai Blues*

27.17 *Rouge*

27.18 *In the Mood for Love*

27.19 *The Mission*

27.20 *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance*

27.21 *Parasite*

27.22 *King of the Children*

27.23 *Hero*

27.24 *Still Life*

27.25 *Long Day's Journey Into Night*

28.1 *Blade Runner*

28.2 *Beauty and the Beast*

28.3 *Dick Tracy*

28.4 *Down with Love*

28.5 *Man on Fire*

28.6 *Natural Born Killers*

28.7 *Do the Right Thing*

28.8 *Heat*

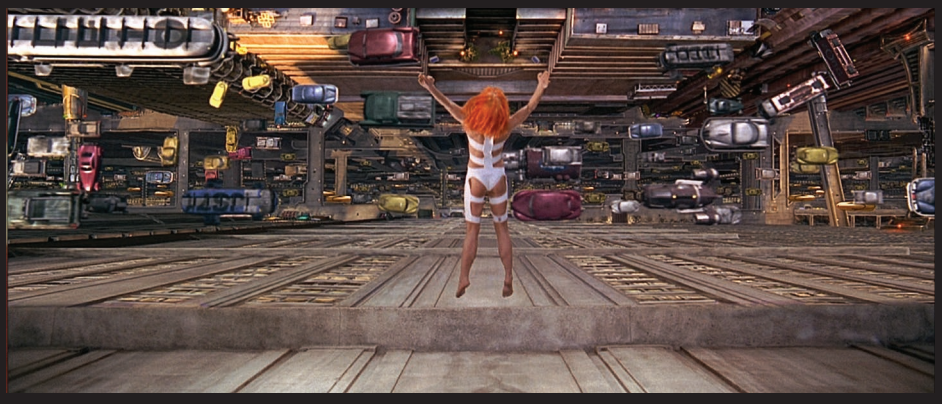
28.9 *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

28.10 *Blue Velvet*

28.11 *Pulp Fiction*

28.12 *The Grand Budapest Hotel*

28.13 *Safe*



29.1 *The Fifth Element*

29.2 *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

29.3 *Star Wars Uncut*

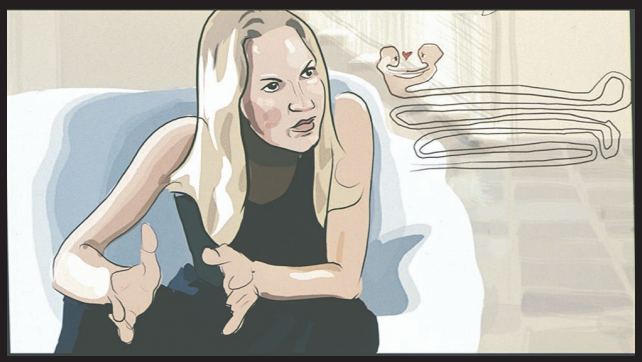
30.1 *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

30.2 *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

30.3 *TRON*

30.4 *Monsters, Inc.*

30.5 *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*



30.6 *Waking Life*

30.7 *Vidocq*

30.8 *Paranorman*

30.9 *Sita Sings the Blues*

30.10 *They Shall Not Grow Old*

30.11 *Collateral*

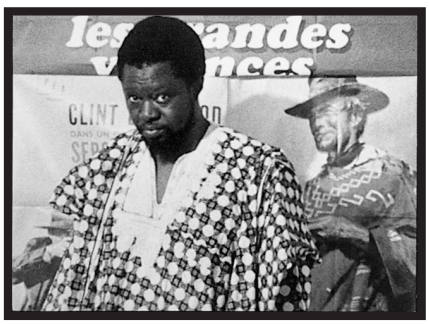
30.12 *Zodiac*

30.13 *Éloge de l'amour*

Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th

CHAPTER 23

POLITICALLY CRITICAL CINEMA OF THE 1960s AND 1970s



Les Bicots-négres, vos voisins

Tensions between the Western powers and the Soviet bloc did not lessen during the 1960s, but there were signs that the bipolar-world model was fracturing. Growing rivalry between China and the Soviet Union led to an open break in 1960. During the rest of the decade, Eastern European peoples strained to loosen Moscow's hold. At the same time, the Third World appeared to be coming into its own. Colonies became sovereign states, and many of their leaders rejected both Soviet and Western ways. Third-Worldism, as it came to be called, was the hope that these developing countries would not only find true liberation but use the experience of oppression to build more just societies.

Economic progress was first on the agenda, but regions were moving at an uneven pace. Mexico, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea were briskly becoming manufacturing centers. India and Africa, however, were not advancing fast enough to offset the rapid rise in their populations.

Political violence intensified the difficulties of development. Apart from the major confrontations between East and West—in Cuba, Vietnam, and the Middle East—the Third World suffered coups d'états, external aggression, civil wars, and ethnic strife. These struggles often gave rise to revolutionary hopes. By the late 1960s, radical observers suggested that sovereignty, nationalism, and economic reform were not enough to help the developing nations. Militants argued that the countries' class systems, holdovers from colonial days, would have to be restructured through socialist revolution.

Film history was profoundly affected by these events in the Third World. As industrialization spread, so did filmgoing. The continued growth of Third World cities—at the rate of 10 million to 11 million people per year in the 1960s—expanded audiences. Significantly, this occurred as attendance was declining in Europe and the United States. A larger proportion

of the world film audience was made up of Indians, Africans, and Asians.

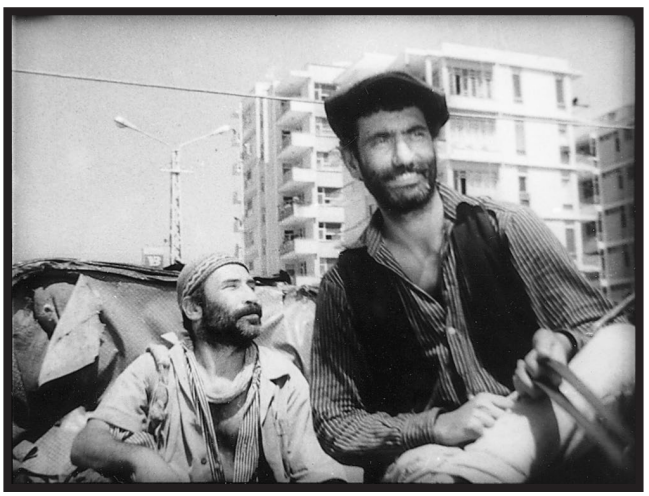
The Third World was at the forefront of revolutionary cinema, foreshadowing trends that would emerge in the developed countries. People were pushing for social change—through protest, through resistance to authority, and sometimes through violent confrontation. Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, filmmaking and film viewing became political acts to a degree not seen since World War II. The first part of this chapter examines how filmmakers treated cinema as a tool of social change and a weapon of political liberation.

In the Soviet bloc countries, many citizens strained to liberalize Communist societies, and the most politically provocative works of Eastern European and Soviet cinema often asserted the individuality of the artist's imagination. In Western Europe and North America, unorthodox left-wing groups criticized government policies, educational institutions, and economic conditions. Radical politics entered daily life. As was often said, the personal had become political.

Many Western radicals were suspicious of the democratic humanism that Soviet bloc reformists craved. Capitalist society, many believed, maintained an "illusory democracy" and "repressive tolerance." Radicals often took Third World leaders such as Mao Zedong, Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro as models of popular revolution. By the mid-1970s, however, militancy gave way to a micropolitics that focused pragmatically on particular issues. What one historian has called "the political culture of dissent" began to permeate everyday life in the Western countries.[1] The second part of this chapter looks at how this culture shaped filmmaking in the First and Second Worlds.

The Land

23.1 A smooth crane shot reflects the technical prowess of Egypt's well-established film industry (*The Land*).



Umut

23.2 *Umut*: as Djabbar (played by Güney) and his customer talk of finding buried treasure, they drive through a neighborhood whose wealth mocks their dreams.

POLITICAL FILMMAKING IN THE THIRD WORLD

Brazil's Cinema Nôvo (see Cinema Nôvo) had struck a compromise between auteur cinema and political critique. Its films were addressed primarily to cultivated viewers who appreciated European art cinema. In the late 1960s, Third World directors began making politically critical films aimed at broader audiences.

In some countries, politicized cinema arose from the same concerns for social critique that had propelled filmmakers in the 1950s. Actors or directors who had found success in a well-organized industry were in a strong position to make critical films. The Egyptian Youssef Chahine, for instance, was able to exploit his commercial reputation to direct such populist films as *The Land* (1969; **23.1**). In Turkey, the actor Yilmaz Güney also benefited from a growing national industry. His popularity enabled him to direct *Umut* ("Hope," 1970), in which Güney stars as a taxi man hoping to strike it rich in the lottery. The film's emphasis on daily routine and its episodic structure put it in the lineage of Neorealism and the early 1960s art cinema, while its slow pace and use of *temps morts* exemplify a resistance to action-filled plotting (**23.2**). *Umut* inspired a new, "engaged" filmmaking in Turkey.

Bhuvan Shome

23.3 When Bhuvan Shome, a cold bureaucrat, goes hunting near a village, a warm-hearted woman teaches him about life, including making him camouflage himself as a tree (*Bhuvan Shome*).

In India, Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome* (1969) sprang largely from the individual filmmaker's urge to launch a social critique. Sen had participated in the left-wing Indian People's Theatre movement and had made films since 1956, but *Bhuvan Shome*, a comic satire on neocolonialist bureaucrats, led him to what he called "a taste for pamphleteering."[2] Using animation, Soviet Montage–style cutting, and documentary footage of protest marches, combined with realistic scenes in the countryside, Sen created a comic satire on a cold-hearted bureaucrat who decides to relieve his boredom by hunting birds (**23.3**). Along with Ritwik Ghatak, the leftist director who had gone into teaching (see Swimming against the Stream: Guru Dutt and Ritwak Ghatak p. 361), Sen helped create the New Indian Cinema of the early 1970s.

Revolutionary Aspirations

Chahine, Güney, and Sen exemplify the general politicized tendency of Third World filmmaking in the late 1960s. But Third-Worldism called for a more militant film practice. Many believed that Third World revolution was in the offing. In 1962, Algeria won a war of independence from France. African colonies, newly liberated, showed promise of indigenous rule.

Some guerrilla wars in Latin America were initially successful. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), founded in 1964, promised to win Palestinians a homeland. Fidel Castro had led a revolution in Cuba, and the US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion had been easily repelled. China's split with Moscow in 1960 seemed to signal the emergence of a non-Soviet-style Communism, and Mao Zedong's pronouncements carried enormous authority among radicals throughout the 1960s. In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh's National Liberation Front, at war with the corrupt regime in the South, had managed to resist US intervention.

The possibility of tricontinental revolution inspired many filmmakers. In the Middle East, for instance, there grew up a New Cinema movement dedicated to Third World revolution. Egyptian anticolonialist films such as Salah Abou Seif's *Cairo '30* (1966) and Tewfik Saleh's *The Rebels* (1968) inspired filmmakers in Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt to make militant features. Palestinian and Algerian resistance organizations made short propaganda pieces. Moroccans established a journal, *Cinema 3* (the "3" standing for Third World). In December 1973, concurrent with a conference of nonaligned countries, Algiers hosted a meeting of Third World filmmakers. Similar activities took place in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The fundamental premise of revolutionary Third World film was that all art, even if it seems to be only entertainment, is deeply political. The stories that are told, the views with which the viewer is asked to sympathize, the values implicit in the action, and even the way in which the story is told—all were held to reflect political ideologies. The domination of Hollywood films in the Third World thus provided an obvious target. Revolutionary cinema would not only reject the ideology that masqueraded as entertainment, but also offer the viewer a politically liberating film experience.

Political Genres and Style

To some extent, revolutionary cinema employed traditional genres, such as documentary or socially critical films set in the present day. But in Latin America and Africa, filmmakers forged new genres of fictional films.

One common genre was the historical examination of mass struggles against imperialism. In almost every country, filmmakers found incidents of resistance or rebellion that could be made relevant to the contemporary scene. There was also the *exile film*, which portrayed the experiences of individuals cut off from their roots and reflecting on their native country from abroad. African filmmakers studying overseas in the 1960s often made films in this genre; Latin American filmmakers also used it to examine their political exile in the 1970s. Yet another genre dealt with indigenous cultures, seeking a

national identity untainted by colonialism. In this genre (known in African cinema as the *return to the sources*), filmmakers drew on folklore, myth, and ritual, then transformed these elements so as to reflect critically upon contemporary politics.

Stylistically, militant Third World filmmakers refused the technical gloss identified with Hollywood spectacle. The lightweight cameras and informal lighting of Direct Cinema let them make films cheaply and quickly. Such techniques also created a sense of a direct, intimate encounter with the event. The rawness of style was itself a political statement.

Yet the filmmakers were also open to aesthetic subtleties. Cuban and Chilean directors followed Glauber Rocha in making the handheld camera an aggressive, kinetic force. Moreover, because sound was seldom recorded during filming, postsynchronization offered rich possibilities for manipulating the sound track in relation to the image. Cuban directors, Argentina's Cine Liberación, and the New Chilean Cinema directors also revived Soviet Montage techniques as part of their rejection of Hollywood continuity style.

Most militant Third World filmmakers came from the middle classes, and many had been trained in Europe. They were intellectuals with deep knowledge of American and European film traditions. As a result, their films often blend formal innovation with direct emotional appeal. Many films of this tradition challenged Western conceptions of cinematic art by showing that mass audiences were not as intolerant of experimentation as Hollywood and Europe had trained them to be. An aesthetically complex film could also address the audience's political concerns.

Latin America

In 1963, the Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes wrote, "South of your border, my North American friends, lies a continent in revolutionary ferment—a continent that possesses immense wealth and nevertheless lives in a misery that you have never known and barely imagine."[3] It was this revolutionary ferment, and the challenge it flung at Europe and the United States, that many Latin American filmmakers sought to advance.

Throughout most of the century, Latin America had been economically dependent on the Western-controlled world market. Most countries exported natural resources in order to develop their industrial infrastructures. But the 1960s saw a stagnation in trade throughout Latin America. This in turn encouraged the growth of authoritarian military regimes, which sought to attract foreign investment and repress political dissent. Many activists went underground. During the early 1970s, Brazil was only one of several South American countries to be assailed by guerrilla warfare and urban terrorism.

In addition, the United States sought to stifle left-wing activity that could disrupt business. President John Kennedy sponsored the Cuban exiles who invaded at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, President Johnson quashed a 1964 uprising in the Dominican Republic, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sought to subvert uncooperative regimes, notably that of Salvador Allende in Chile. Such actions only intensified the sense of Latin America as a battleground between economic imperialism and mass insurgence.

Some artists took sides in this conflict. The Argentine Antonio Berni made disturbing collages out of junked First World commodities, and the Colombian Fernando Botero mocked authority in his eerie paintings of inflated, vacantly staring priests and generals. Closer to cinema was the *nueva canción* ("new song") movement, which began in Chile as a mix of indigenous sources with politically critical lyrics. The music spread throughout Latin America, becoming internationally popular through the Cuban singer Silvio Rodriguez. Film played an equally important role in presenting revolutionary ideology through popular art.

In Cuba, the only country to undergo a left-wing revolution, filmmaking was sponsored by Fidel Castro's regime, but elsewhere militant filmmakers usually gathered in twos or threes, often working with political groups or labor unions. It might happen, as in Argentina and Chile, that a new government would support or at least tolerate their activities, but the resurgence of right-wing regimes drove filmmakers into exile. By the mid-1970s, many worked outside their native countries.

More than other Third World filmmakers, Latin American directors were haunted by Hollywood cinema. American films had dominated southern markets since the mid-1910s. Hollywood's flirtation with South American locales and music during the 1930s and 1940s, although presenting stereotyped images, intensified audience interest in US genres and stars. The dreamlike glamour of the studio cinema profoundly influenced the countries' cultures. The Argentine novelist Manuel Puig has recalled that for him the American films shown on his small town's movie screen created a "parallel reality . . . which, I was convinced, existed somewhere beyond my town, and in all three dimensions."[4]

Politicized Latin American directors sometimes assimilated elements of the Hollywood product they knew so well, but they also turned to foreign models of socially

critical cinema. As in the 1950s, Italian Neorealism was a pervasive influence, particularly in the handling of nonprofessional actors and location shooting. Direct Cinema documentary was also an important source, as it had been for the Cinema Nôvo group. In *Tarahumara* (1964), for instance, the Mexican Luis Alcoriza uses the handheld camera much as Ruy Guerra had in *Os Fuzis* (**23.4**). For both aesthetic and economic reasons, most Latin American directors shot on location with nonprofessional performers, using a lightweight camera and postsynchronizing dialogue.

In editing, filmmakers usually relied on the principles of Hollywood continuity. There were, however, some experiments that harked back to Soviet silent cinema, particularly Sergei Eisenstein's "intellectual montage." For example, the Argentine *La Hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*, 1968) crosscuts a soft-drink ad with the slaughter of a bull (**23.5**). Similarly, the use of sound could intensify thematically pointed editing. In the Cuban film *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), newsreel shots of victims of military torture are intercut with society women applauding.

All these stylistic tendencies, along with elements drawn from European young cinemas, led Latin American film to blur the boundaries between documentary and fiction. The use of nonactors, the immediacy of the handheld camera, the interpolation of newsreel footage, and the focus on topical issues gave the films the urgency of reportage, even if their action was set in the past. At the same time, by assimilating modernist techniques—fragmentary flashbacks, elliptical narration, to-camera address—directors avoided the stolidity of Soviet Socialist Realism.

Driven by a desire to capture the continent's political aspirations, new directors sought a more immediate contact with the public than was characteristic of most other young cinemas. In Cuba, directors merged experimental form with entertainment. Like the tropicalist Cinema Nôvo works (see Tropicalism and Cannibalism p. 418), some films drew on folklore traditions, particularly oral storytelling. Other films were designed to provoke discussion after the screening.

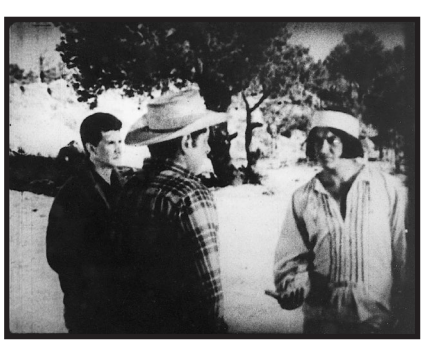
Latin American filmmakers also resembled the Soviet Montagists and the Italian Neorealists in their eagerness to connect theory and practice. In the late 1960s, critical discussion of political cinema generated essays and manifestos, notably Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's "Towards a Third Cinema" (1969) and Julio García Espinosa's "For an Imperfect Cinema" (1969). No single theoretical "line" characterized all Third World cinema, but such writings, accompanied by films of striking energy and force, crystallized issues faced by revolutionary filmmakers around the globe.

Cuba: Cinema of Revolution In 1956, a band of exiles landed on Cuba's shores, determined to overthrow President Fulgencio Batista. Less than three years later, Batista fled the country. On New Year's Day 1959, Fidel Castro led his guerrilla forces into Havana. Latin America had seen its first revolution since World War II.

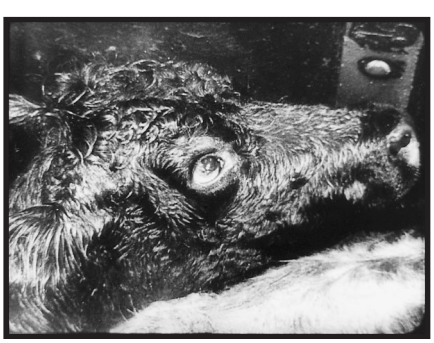
Castro quickly expropriated land, executed officials of the hated Batista regime, and nationalized the economy. Cuba identified itself as a socialist state and swung its allegiance toward the USSR, a policy intensified by a US embargo. After the fiasco of the US-sponsored invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and the missile crisis of 1962, Cuba became a Soviet satellite.

While the USSR provided the country with exports and financial aid, Fidel's comrade-in-arms Che Guevara favored assisting revolts throughout South America. For much of the Third World, Cuba came to symbolize anti-imperialist revolution. The vibrancy of Cuban literature and music attracted worldwide attention and formed a central cultural influence on other Latin American countries.

The first act of Castro's government in the artistic sphere was the 1959 creation of the Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC, "Cuban Institute of Film Art and Industry"). Headed by Alfredo Guevara, the ICAIC became a center of the new Cuban film culture. In 1960, it founded a film archive and a film journal, *Cine cubano*. By 1965, the ICAIC ran all production, distribution, and exhibition in the country. It trained all



Tarahumara



The Hour of the Furnaces

23.4, *left* In a nervous handheld shot, the Indian Corachi confronts his landlord (*Tarahumara*).

23.5, *right* Intellectual montage in *The Hour of the Furnaces*: the bull, evoking the slaughter of the workers in Eisenstein's *Strike*, represents the oppression of Argentines working in the beef-export industry.

personnel and oversaw import and export. In a gesture reminiscent of Soviet and Chinese mobile projection units, the ICAIC established *cine moviles*, trucks that visited remote areas to hold screenings.

The ICAIC also produced a great many films. Under earlier governments, filmmaking had been a cheap, small-scale affair, consisting almost wholly of routine genre pictures and pornography. The ICAIC had to create a production base. Thanks to government subsidies and extensive support by foreign talent, large-scale filmmaking began in 1960. By the early 1970s, the new government had turned out 500 newsreels, 300 documentary shorts, and more than 50 features. Because the relatively prosperous Cubans were devoted moviegoers, the ICAIC could recoup production costs in the home market. In addition, many of the new Cuban films were ripe for export to Europe and the USSR.

Because Cuba had too few trustworthy prerevolutionary directors, the ICAIC had to assign films to untried talents. Former ciné-club members Julio García Espinosa and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea had made only experimental shorts before the revolution. Humberto Solás directed his first feature, the epic *Lucía* (1968), when he was only twenty-six. The young directors of the ICAIC became Cuba's equivalent of Europe's young cinemas or Brazil's Cinema Nôvo.

In the early 1960s, the ICAIC concentrated on documentary shorts, which not only offered good training grounds for beginning talent but also answered the need for promulgating government policies. The outstanding exponent of the new Cuban documentary was Santiago Alvarez, creator of *Now!* (1965), *Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th* (1967), *79 Springtimes* (1969), and other short films. Alvarez combined stock footage, titles, animation, and wide-ranging sound sources to create partisan agit-films in the Soviet Montage vein (**23.6**, **23.7**).

Despite Cuba's alignment with Moscow, artists did not embrace Socialist Realism. The ICAIC's members debated the nature of revolutionary art, and filmmakers were open to influences from many sources. The feature films of the early years often bore the stamp of Neorealism. García Espinosa and Gutiérrez Alea had studied at Italy's Centro Sperimentale, and Gutiérrez Alea's *Stories of the Revolution* (1960) borrowed its episode structure from Roberto Rossellini's *Paisan*. The Neorealist scriptwriter Cesare Zavattini contributed to the script of Garcia Espinosa's *The Young Rebel* (1961).

By 1966, filmmakers were going beyond the Neorealist model and adopting strategies of cinematic modernism. The Cuban directors knew the works of Michelangelo Antonioni, Ingmar Bergman, Alain Resnais, and the Nouvelle Vague directors. They cited other films in an affectionate or critical spirit. They also drew on characteristic art-cinema techniques: abrupt flashbacks and flashforwards, fantasy sequences, handheld camerawork, elliptical editing, and the mixing of staged footage, documentary, and animation into a cinematic collage.

Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th

23.6 In *Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th*, the editing makes President Johnson's wife, Lady Bird, . . .

Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th

23.7 . . . seem to be laughing at a suffering Vietnamese woman.

Yet the Cuban directors did not simply mimic the European art cinema. As with the Cinema Nôvo directors, circumstances and commitments drove them to explore a politicized modernism. This ran parallel to efforts in capitalist countries. In Cuba, however, the directors consistently modified modernist techniques to make them accessible to wide audiences. The ICAIC welcomed experimentation that demystified the filmmaking process. Alfredo Guevara urged filmmakers "to reveal all the tricks, all the resources of language; to dismantle all the mechanisms of cinematic hypnosis."[5] Because Cuban filmmakers tended to use familiar genres, they made film form less ambiguous or obscure than did the most experimental Brazilian and European directors.

Gutiérrez Alea's *Death of a Bureaucrat* (1966), for instance, updates that perennial socialist genre, the satire on bureaucracy. Animation, newsreels, and still photos interrupt the action with bits of grotesque comedy that recall Dušan Makavejev. The film rushes through affectionate homages to Federico Fellini, Luis Buñuel, and Hollywood comedians (**23.8**).

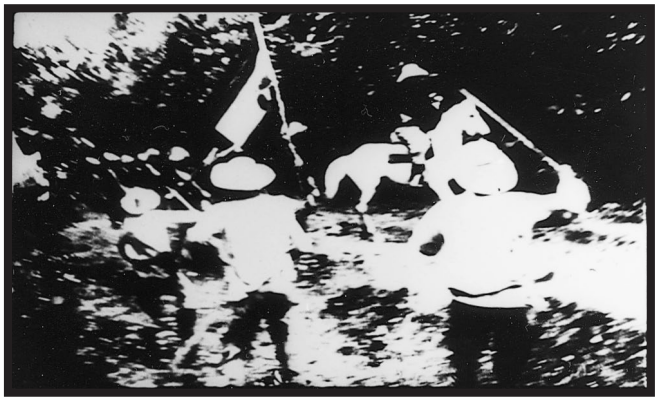
Also comic in tone is García Espinosa's *Adventures of Juan Quin Quin* (1967), a parody of Hollywood Westerns centering on a young revolutionary. Other films, notably *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *Lucía*, offered more serious models of critically assimilating other traditions (see Two Revolutionary Films: *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *Lucía*). Another important attempt to create an

accessible political modernism was Manuel Octavio Gómez's *First Charge of the Machete* (1969). One of several historical films celebrating the Hundred Years of Struggle, *First Charge* recreates an 1869 revolt, when the machete became a weapon of the oppressed sugarcane cutters. Gómez made the film as if it were a 1969 news report, complete with to-camera interviews, direct sound, handheld shooting, and high-contrast film stock (**23.9**). The most innovative Cuban filmmakers recognized the need for what García Espinosa in 1969 called "imperfect cinema"—popular, addressed at problems, and helping to make the viewers into "co-creators" of the work.

While winning large audiences, Cuban directors followed the Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s in adapting modernist techniques to the need of a propagandistic cinema. The debt to the Soviet tradition is explicitly noted in Gómez's *Days of Water* (1971). Insurgent peasants fire in the countryside and hit people in the city (an echo of the impossible geography of Montage films). In a climax that

Death of a Bureaucrat

23.8 A tit-for-tat fight between bureaucrats in a cemetery evokes Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy (*Death of a Bureaucrat*).



First Charge of the Machete

23.9 Like many Cuban films, *First Charge of the Machete* uses Direct Cinema technique to present staged events with an aggressive immediacy.

TWO REVOLUTIONARY FILMS: *MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT* AND *LUCÍA*

In the fall of 1968, there premiered two films that exemplified the diversity of the Cuban postrevolutionary cinema. Both became paradigms of political filmmaking within Latin America.

Memories of Underdevelopment, directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, portrays an intellectual uncertain about his allegiance to the revolution. Sergio's contempt for those who leave Cuba for the United States is counterbalanced by his self-centered lifestyle and his unwillingness to build the new society.

Gutiérrez Alea uses art-cinema techniques already associated with the "alienated bourgeois" in European cinema to characterize a man out of synchronization with the revolution. Abrupt flashbacks, fantasy scenes, and a continuous inner monologue expose Sergio's creative paralysis and unfulfilled sexual desires (**23.10**). Somewhat in the manner of Antonioni, Gutiérrez Alea follows Sergio on aimless walks through the city. There is even a reflexive scene in which Gutiérrez Alea tells Sergio of his new film, "a collage that will have a bit of everything"—referring to *Memories of Underdevelopment* itself.

Memories of Underdevelopment

23.10 Sergio, the emasculated intellectual, pulls his wife's stocking over his face and stares at his lipstick-smeared reflection (*Memories of Underdevelopment*).

Memories of Underdevelopment

23.11 As Sergio walks to the camera, his features dissolve into a grainy blur; his voice intones: "You're alone. . . . You're nothing, you're dead" (*Memories of Underdevelopment*).

Memories of Underdevelopment

23.12 The sound of Sergio flicking his lighter eerily evokes his isolation when heard under the shots of tanks and a populace determined to resist invasion (*Memories of Underdevelopment*).

Lucía

23.13 *A nun blesses the war's victims in a high-contrast subjective image from Lucía.*

Lucía

23.14 *Lucía*: operatic emotions of the bourgeoisie.

While utilizing the techniques of cinematic modernism, the film is far less obscure and ambiguous than its European counterparts. Momentary uncertainties are quickly resolved by the verbal commentary or the narrative situation. The inner monologue gives thematic significance to the long-held telephoto image in which Sergio's face disintegrates (**23.11**).

Gutiérrez Alea's collage of fiction and documentary enables him to exploit principles of Eisenstein's intellectual montage (see The Theoretical Writings of Montage Filmmakers p. 111). In context, the juxtapositions also reflect Sergio's bitter, paralyzed consciousness. At the film's climax, as the Cuban missile crisis unfolds, Gutiérrez Alea cuts between Sergio in his penthouse and newsreels of Havana's mobilization (**23.12**). The film's final images of crashing waves cites the beginning of *Potemkin*; over shots of the breakers we hear Cuban tanks rumbling into battle.

Lucía, directed by Humberto Solás, also confronts its main characters with political crises. The film celebrates Cuba's struggle for liberty through three episodes from Cuban history, each centering upon a woman named Lucía. "Lucía 1895" shows a woman wooed by a Spanish secret agent; he uses her love to gain knowledge of her brother's rebel band. In "Lucía 1933," a woman and her revolutionary lover watch his party descend into corruption. "Lucía 196–" is a comedy in which a vibrant woman learns to resist her tyrannical husband.

Solás was infatuated with Alain Resnais and Michelangelo Antonioni during his youth, and each episode of *Lucía* explores different trends within cinematic modernism. "Lucía 1895" oscillates between dazzlingly overexposed images, associated with the comfortable bourgeois life, and scorched, high-contrast images of the Spanish-American War and of Lucía's imagination (**23.13**). In a pastiche of Luchino Visconti's *Senso*, Lucía's love for Rafael is rendered operatic by soaring romantic music and the couple's histrionic poses (**23.14**).

(continued)

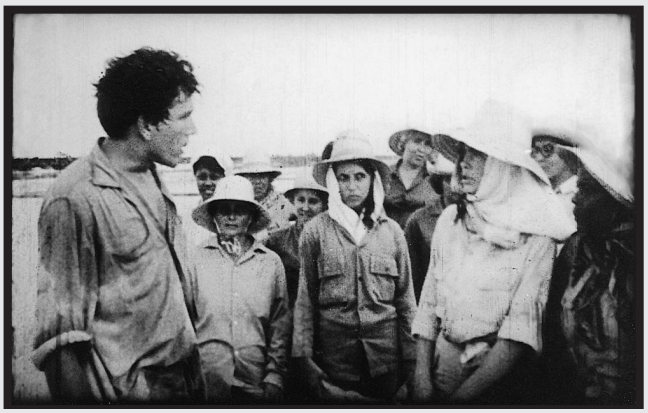
TWO REVOLUTIONARY FILMS: *MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT* AND *LUCÍA* continued

Lucía

23.15 *Lucía*: a muted romantic scene, reminiscent of Antonioni.

Lucía

23.16 After Aldo has been killed, Lucía's gaze at the camera irresistibly recalls the finale of *The 400 Blows* (see 20.13).


Lucía

23.17 Tomás confronts Lucía after she has disobeyed him and returned to work.

"Lucía 1933" yields an understated lyricism reminiscent of François Truffaut. Soft lighting, abbreviated scenes, and sudden shifts of mood evoke 1960s French cinema (**23.15**, **23.16**). "Lucía 196–" portrays contemporary Cuban society by means of a third stylistic approach. Now the staging is loose and naturalistic (**23.17**). Direct Cinema observational tactics recall Milos Forman and other Czech directors, as does the dry comedy when under Tomás's jealous, but sleepy, eye a teacher helps Lucía learn to read. The folkish pop tune "Guantanamera" becomes a recurring musical commentary.

Such technical virtuosity enabled Gutiérrez Alea and Solás to compare political processes across a variety of epochs, moods, and styles. *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *Lucía* convinced critics that cinema from the Third World could fuse artistic ambitions with political engagement.

recasts *Potemkin*'s Odessa Steps massacre, stylized bourgeois figures are slain on a staircase (**23.18**).

Between 1972 and 1975, however, Cuban directors retreated somewhat from experimentation. Problems with the nation's economy led to a cut in film production. Solás's *A Day in November* (1972) was never released. Acrimonious national debates about writers' loyalty made artists cautious, and the ICAIC intensified the emphasis on popular forms. Cuban cinema nonetheless commanded respect around the world. While Brazil's Cinema Nôvo films succeeded chiefly with elite viewers, the Cubans demonstrated that Third World cinema could blend modernist conventions with narrative forms to which mass audiences had become accustomed.

Argentina: Third Cinema During the 1950s, the Argentine documentarist Fernando Birrí had created a critical and realistic "cinema of discovery" that inspired many among South American filmmakers (see Brazil and Argentina). Argentina had also pioneered a Latin American art cinema in the works of Leopoldo Torre Nilsson (see Brazil and Argentina p. 363).

Days of Water

23.18 *Days of Water* invokes and updates *Potemkin*: a handheld camera records the people's massacre of the bourgeoisie on a flight of steps.

In the early 1960s, the country had its own mild *Nueva Ola*, or New Wave, consisting of filmmakers who presented the young Buenos Aires middle class much in the manner of Claude Chabrol or Louis Malle. And, in the late 1960s, Argentina was the scene of one of the most influential movements within militant filmmaking.

After the fall of the nationalist President Juan Perón, a series of regimes tried to eliminate his support among the people. A 1966 military coup shut down the Argentine legislature, disbanded political parties, and suppressed the labor movement. The regime tried to impose a distribution quota on US films but gave in to pressure from the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA). Most commercial filmmakers turned out sanctioned works, based on folklore or official versions of Argentine history.

At the same time, the left, the middle class, student groups, and Peronists worked to unseat the military government. A parallel political cinema was exemplified in Jorge Cedrón's *Operación masacre* ("Operation Massacre," 1969), which revealed the government's attempt to murder key Peronists. The most influential political films came from the Cine Liberación group. Founded by the left-wing Peronists Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Cine Liberación played a central role in defining political cinema in Latin America.

Solanas and Getino's major film was *La Hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*, 1968). This four-hour work blended Direct Cinema, staged scenes, and a dense sound track to create a film tract of a complexity akin to the work of Dziga Vertov and Chris Marker. Its three parts aimed to provoke argument and action. "Neocolonialism and Violence," dedicated to Che Guevara, shows Argentina exploited by Europe, the United States, and ruling elites. The second part, "An Act for Liberation," dissects the failures of Peronism. The third part, "Violence and Liberation," centers on interviews with activists discussing prospects for change.

The Hour of the Furnaces bombards the spectator with a collage of images and sounds, always to agitational ends. Images collide: founders of the country and contemporary middle-class golfers, a massacre of mountain people and a contemporary disco. The "myth of a universal culture" is mocked by cutting from an academic painting to a man dragged off by police (**23.19**, **23.20**). The sound track intensifies the disjunctions. When contemporary pop music is heard while the camera tracks through museums, the film suggests the coopting of intellectuals by the mass media.

Reaching out directly to its audience, *The Hour of the Furnaces* was circulated among workers' groups and shown in secret meetings. Although Solanas and Getino took a Peronist line, they wanted the film to be interrupted by discussions among the audience. At one point, the film halts: "Now it is up to you to draw conclusions, to continue the film. You have the floor."

Out of the experience of making and screening *The Hour of the Furnaces* came several Cine Liberación manifestos defining a "Third Cinema." Solanas and Getino equated First Cinema with the Hollywood movie, which overwhelmed its viewer with spectacle and made each viewer a consumer of bourgeois ideology. Second Cinema was auteur-centered art cinema. In fostering individual expression, Second Cinema was a step forward, particularly in Cinema Nôvo works; but its time was now past. Third Cinema used film as a weapon for liberation, making every participant a "film-guerrilla." The director was part of a collective, not only a production cadre but also a mass movement working on behalf of the oppressed.

In line with the formal innovations of *The Hour of the Furnaces*, Solanas and Getino called for Third Cinema to break with individual protagonists and orthodox narrative. The conditions of viewing would also have to be transformed. Solanas and Getino urged filmmakers to create secret distribution circuits among insurgent groups: if a screening is clandestine, the viewer takes a risk simply in coming and becomes a "participant-comrade," ready to think and debate.

The Cine Liberación articles remained vague in ideology. They spoke the language of populist rebellion rather than of Cuban-style revolution. Still, "Towards a Third Cinema" became as important as Espinosa's "Imperfect Cinema" essay in formulating the aspirations of radical film in the underdeveloped countries.

During the early 1970s, Argentina came apart. Government repression was met by insurrections and terrorism. Solanas and Getino contributed by filming two documentary

The Hour of the Furnaces

23.19, 23.20 Through the similarity of the figures' outstretched arms, the other-worldliness of art is confronted by the reality of political violence (*The Hour of the Furnaces*).

interviews with the exiled Perón. They also founded a magazine, *Cine y liberación*. Getino directed *El Familiar* (1972), an allegorical fiction feature on the destiny of Latin America. Other filmmakers continued to make Peronist films, and ultra-left groups such as Cine de Base emerged.

By 1973, the military authorities could not contain the upheaval or cure the nation's economic woes. Perón returned as president. The Cine Liberación leaders began working for his regime. Solanas headed an independent filmmaking association, while Getino ran the national censorship board. He readmitted all banned films, liberalized censorship, and offered financing to exhibitors and film unions. A new film law was drafted that would increase government support to the industry. Cine de Base remained underground, making films that denounced Perónism as Fascism.

Perón soon confirmed such suspicions by cracking down on the left. He died in 1974, and his wife Isabel succeeded him. She could not check the country's inflation or the guerrilla war that blazed between left and right. In the chaos, all reform of the cinema was forgotten. The Cine Liberación directors fled, Getino to Peru, Solanas to Paris. Both continued to work in exile.

In 1976, the military seized power and launched a brutal assault on the opposition. Over the years, as many as 20,000 people disappeared, most killed by death squads. Film production virtually halted. The Sono Film studio closed in 1977, and Torre Nilsson died in exile a year later. Not until the mid-1980s would Argentine cinema reemerge from the shadows of the generals.

New Chilean Cinema Political cinema in Chile followed a pattern similar to that enacted in Brazil and Argentina. In the 1960s, an energetic critical cinema emerged in a hostile political environment. It became aligned with a liberal government before being cast out by a coup and a repressive military regime in the 1970s.

Chilean film culture grew during the 1960s, when the University of Chile organized a national film archive and a department of experimental cinema. Joris Ivens visited to teach. A film festival was founded at Viña del Mar in 1962, and in 1967 this event hosted the first continental meeting of Latin American filmmakers. Artists in other media, spearheaded by the Communist poet Pablo Neruda, began to agitate for social change.

Chilean film production was minuscule until 1967, when the moderate government of Eduardo Frei began to offer some support to the industry. Young directors quickly came forward. Raúl Ruiz's *Tres tristes tigres* (*Three Sad Tigers*, 1968) presents a casually bizarre view of middle-class intellectuals drifting through bars, indifferent to politics. Aldo Francia's *Valparaiso mi amor* ("Valparaiso My Love," 1969) traces the history of a teenage girl whom poverty drives to prostitution. Miguel Littín's *El Chacal de Nahueltoro* (*The Jackal of Nahueltoro*, 1969) investigates a murderer's life, discovering the causes of his crime in his social milieu.

The Chileans' political situation was similar to that faced by the Argentine Cine Liberación, but their films are closer to Cuban work in their mixture of popular fiction and art-cinema techniques. The flashbacks of *The Jackal of Nahueltoro* recall European art cinema, while *Tres tristes tigres* uses surrealist images to undercut the conventions of kitsch melodrama (**23.21**).

Most of these directors aligned themselves with the Marxist Salvador Allende and his Popular Unity party. As with *The Hour of the Furnaces*, political groups projected *The Jackal of Nahueltoro* in political meetings and union halls (**23.22**). In 1970, Allende won a narrow victory at the

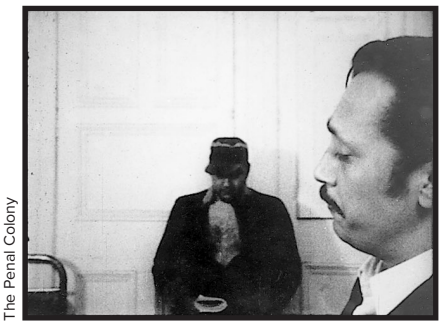
Tres tristes tigres

23.21 A mysterious cutaway to a barroom full of bottles in Ruiz's *Tres tristes tigres*.

The Jackal of Nahueltoro

23.22 The execution scene of *The Jackal of Nahueltoro*: based on a real-life case, the film was used in campaigns against the president, who refused to pardon the killer.

The Penal Colony


The Penal Colony

23.23, *left* In *The Penal Colony*, an interview presumably free of police surveillance . . .

23.24, *right* . . .suddenly reveals an observing officer in the next shot.

polls. He moved toward socializing the economy, nationalizing copper and other key industries. Immediately, the United States led an effort to undermine his government, creating an "invisible blockade" against Chile. At the same time, Allende faced criticism from the radical wing of his party, who wanted reforms to move faster.

After Allende's triumph, Miguel Littín, among the most militant of the young filmmakers, composed a manifesto recalling Garcia Espinosa's imperfect cinema and the Solanas-Getino idea of Third Cinema. "The people are the generators of action and finally the true creators; the filmmaker is their instrument of communication."[6] Littín became head of Chile Films, a government agency that produced several documentary films. He hoped to create an exhibition network that would add discussions to screenings in the manner urged by Cine Liberación.

Littín stayed with Chile Films less than a year. At this time, the film industry faced growing economic problems. As part of the US boycott of Allende's government, the MPEAA companies ceased shipping prints and demanded advance payment for rentals. Soon, Chilean audiences, among the most movie-addicted on the continent, had a choice among only European and Soviet bloc titles.

Under Allende, the New Cinema directors offered more radical films. Helvio Soto's *Voto + Fusil* (*The Vote and the Gun*, 1970) presents three generations of the Chilean left reuniting at dinner and rethinking their positions. Aldo Francia's *It's No Longer Enough to Pray* (1971) urges Catholics to engage in political activism. Ruiz made several films, many taking a wry attitude to official politics; his *The Penal Colony* (1971) conveys the invasiveness of a police state (**23.23, 23.24**).

Despite a barrage of economic difficulties, CIA attempts to subvert the government, and growing violence between right and left, Allende was reelected in March 1973. But soon, in the most violent coup in twentieth-century Latin America, the military seized power. Thousands of Chileans perished. Allende died when the army bombarded the presidential palace.

General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte took command and proclaimed a state of siege. He dissolved the constitution, disbanded the congress, and outlawed political parties. The military destroyed film schools and production centers, burning film and smashing equipment. Workers at Chile Films were fired or arrested.

Most of the young Chilean filmmakers fled. Soto went to Spain. In Cuba, Patricio Guzmán completed *The Battle of Chile* (1973–1979), a documentary on the Allende years. In Paris, Littín finished *The Promised Land* (1973), a symbolic account of an earlier coup. Ruiz settled in Paris as well, rapidly turning out dry, quirky films such as *Dialogue of Exiles* (1974). Littín went on to Cuba and Mexico, producing historical epics celebrating the resistance of Latin American peoples. In all, Chilean filmmakers produced dozens of works outside their native land. But their exile proved a long one. Pinochet's dictatorship lasted sixteen years.

Working in Exile Throughout Latin America, the revolutionary ferment of the 1960s waned during the next decade. In 1960, most governments had been moderately democratic, but, by 1973, dictators ruled most countries. No other nation followed Cuba's lead in creating a revolution. Indeed, Cuba was showing signs of the authoritarian rule characteristic of Soviet satellites.

As repressive regimes came to power, filmmakers emigrated to Europe, Mexico, and Cuba. Glauber Rocha shot *Der Leone Have Sept Cabeças* (*The Lion Has Seven Heads*, 1970) in the People's Republic of the Congo; he described the film as "a communiqué on the cinema of the 1960s," a dialogue with Eisenstein, Bertolt Brecht, and Godard.[7] Ruy Guerra returned to his native Mozambique, assisting its Marxist government by building a film institute and shooting documentaries.

Other exiles worked in relative proximity to their targets, serving as guerrilla provocateurs in Solanas and Getino's sense. The most famous example was the Bolivian Jorge Sanjinés. In the early 1960s, Sanjinés created a film school and ciné-club while making some short agitational films. With friends he made several features, the outstanding one being *Blood of the Condor* (1969). The film attacked the American Peace Corps and its policies forcing birth control onto Indian communities. The premiere

triggered a street demonstration, and the film played a large role in banning the Peace Corps from Bolivia.

A 1971 Fascist coup drove Sanjinés into exile, where he completed *The Courage of the People* (1971). Mixing documentary photographs, survivors' testimony, and staged sequences, the film exposes the 1967 massacre of striking miners by the Bolivian government. Now barred from returning to Bolivia, Sanjinés and his Ukamau Group set *The Principal Enemy* (1971) in Peru. The film depicts the problems of guerrilla warfare in the era of Che Guevara's mobilization of regional peasants. *Get Out of Here!* (1976) treats missionaries among Ecuador's tribal communities as carriers of US imperialism.

While *Blood of the Condor* resembles other militant filmmaking of its period, Sanjinés's exile films created a more novel aesthetic. Encouraging nonactors to reenact their own experiences, he treated films as collective efforts—an idea in line with Third Cinema and imperfect- cinema manifestos. Refusing to structure the plot around individuals, the Ukamau Group created a mass hero reminiscent of 1920s Soviet filmmaking. But they employed long shots and long takes rather than montage; as Sanjinés explained,

> Jumping right away to close-ups of the assassin—in *The Principal Enemy*—in the crowded plaza where the popular tribunal was held didn't serve our purposes, because the surprise that is always produced by directly cutting to a close-up was opposed to what we were trying to develop in the sequence shots, which was to engage the participation of the viewer by means of the internal power of the people's collective participation.[8]

The *plan-séquence* was utilized in the postwar European cinema to capture the moment-by-moment flow of psychological states (see Formal and Stylistic Trends p. 387), but here it signifies an oppressed group's solidarity (**23.25**). Guided by political commitment and formal exploration, the guerrilla cinema of exile practiced by Sanjinés and the Ukamau Group continued the traditions of Latin American revolutionary cinema into the 1970s.

The Principal Enemy

23.25 The long take of the people's tribunal in *The Principal Enemy*.

Black African Cinema

During the mid-1970s, militant filmmaking waned in Latin America, but in Africa it began to come into its own. Black African colonies won independence in the early 1960s. A decade later, most of the major countries had produced at least one feature-length film. In a region that suffered two protracted wars, forty coups and revolts, and several devastating droughts and famines, it is remarkable that even this many films appeared.

Still, most countries lacked the finances, equipment, and infrastructure to found a film industry. Regional distribution was controlled by European and American interests, which dumped cheap films on the market. Pictures from Egypt, India, and Hong Kong dominated theaters. Moreover, individual countries' audiences were usually too small to support a national industry.

African filmmakers therefore sought cooperation. A biennial festival was established in Carthage, Tunisia, in 1966, and another, FESPACO, in Burkina Faso. A continental association, the Fédération Panafricaine des Cinéastes (FEPACI) was established in 1970 to facilitate exchange of information and to help lobby governments to support production.

Senegal, Ivory Coast, and other French-speaking nations were the earliest and strongest sources of Black African cinema. These were among the most industrially developed nations, and film production benefited from contributions from the French Ministry of Cooperation. From 1963 to 1980, the ministry offered both financing and production facilities, eventually assisting more than a hundred films. Yet the films circulated only to cultural centers, not commercial theaters, so most were not seen by the broad population.

The first generation of indigenous African filmmakers included Paulin Vieyra and the novelist Ousmane Sembene (both from Senegal), Med Hondo (Mauritania), Desiré Ecaré (Ivory Coast), and Oumarou Ganda (Niger). Their contemporary Sarah Maldoror (from Guadeloupe) worked in various African countries. Many were leftist artists: Sembene was a Communist who learned filmmaking in Moscow; Maldoror, also trained in Moscow, was married to an Angolan revolutionary leader.

Several directors began with short films portraying exile life. Vieyra's *Afrique sur Seine* ("Africa on the Seine," 1955), made while he was at the French film school IDHEC,

À nous deux France

23.26 Assimilated Africans dance, apparently oblivious to their compatriots' living conditions, in *À nous deux, France*.

Xala

23.27 In *Xala*, the briefcase-carrying businessman pleads with a *marabout*, or "magic healer," to restore his potency.

Sambizanga

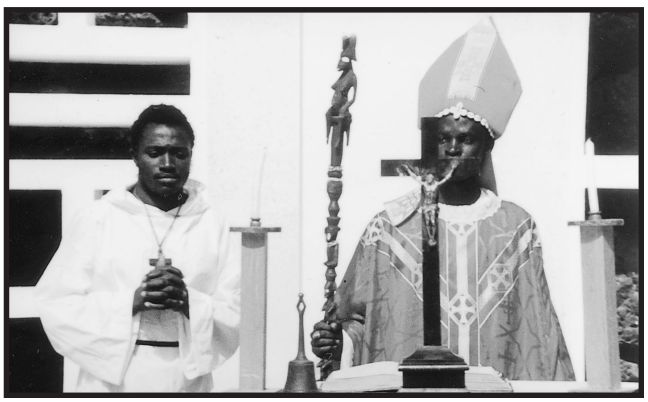
23.28 *Sambizanga*: the protagonist's husband is seized by the police. Like many Third World filmmakers, Maldoror uses long lenses and a handheld camera in order to suggest a documentary record.

displays the influence of Italian Neorealism in its portrayal of the daily life of African students in Paris. Sembene's *La Noire de . . .* (*Black Girl*, 1966) shows the misery of a woman brought to France to serve as a kitchen maid. Ecaré's *Concerto pour un exil* ("Concerto for an Exile," 1967) and *À nous deux, France* ("Let's Go, France!" 1970) are satirical studies of assimilated Africans who mimic French ways (**23.26**).

Directors also turned to neocolonialism as a subject. Sembene's *Borom Sarret* (1963), often considered the first indigenous Black African film, is a poignant study of a day in the life of a cart driver in Dakar. In quasi-documentary fashion, using voice-over inner monologue, Sembene shows that independence has not lessened Africa's poverty and suffering. *Mandabi* (*The Money Order*, 1968) is a rough comedy about cultural transition, while *Xala* ("The Curse of Impotence," 1974) turns a Buñuelian ferocity on neocolonialist elites who exploit the masses whom they are supposed to represent (**23.27**).

Critiques of colonial regimes also formed a basis of African films. Sembene's *Emitai* ("God of Thunder," 1972) portrays the clash of French soldiers with a local tribe in World War II. The anticolonial insurrection in Angola was dramatized in Maldoror's *Sambizanga* (1972), which depicts the imprisonment of a revolutionary leader and the struggle of his wife to free him (**23.28**). Once Angola's Marxist faction won sovereignty in 1975, it produced films recalling the war and summoning people to support the new regime. Other African nations that adopted socialist governments, such as Mozambique and Ethiopia, made films denouncing their colonialist past.

In the 1970s, African filmmakers also sought to return to the sources of their cultures. As elsewhere in the Third World, indigenous cultures had long been concealed or distorted by Western images. Sebastien Kamba's *La Rançon d'une alliance* ("The Price of a Union," Congo, 1973) traces



Ceddo

23.29 In *Ceddo*, a contemporary Catholic ceremony interrupts the seventeenth-century story and reveals the bishop's crosier to be a *samp*, or tribal scepter.

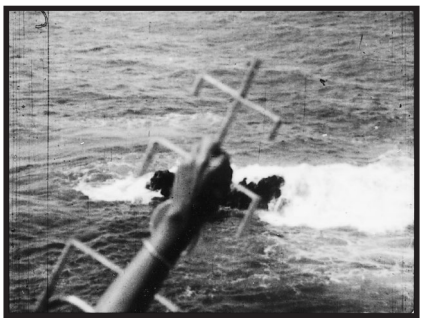
the effects of clan rivalry before the arrival of the Europeans. Haile Gerima's *Harvest: 3,000 Years* (Ethiopia, 1975) portrays peasants' attempts to overturn a feudal land system.

The most famous film of the return-to-the-sources tendency is Sembene's *Ceddo* ("Outsider," 1977). The film shows the clash among Islam, Christianity, and indigenous tribal traditions. Stately in its unfolding of the kidnapping of a princess, the film occasionally cuts ahead to Senegal in the future (**23.29**).

Ceddo is characteristic of African cinema in another way. Believing that oral storytelling is an important part of African culture, many directors have sought to transpose its subjects, plots, and techniques into cinematic terms. Sembene, for example, self-consciously adopts the role of a *griot*, the traditional storyteller.

> Often the worker and the peasant don't have the time to pause on the details of their lives: they live them and do not have the time to tie them down. The filmmaker, though, can

La Noire de


Touki-Bouki

23.30, *left* *La Noire de . . .* : colonial clichés challenged by the Black servant's inner monologue.

23.31, *right* The sexual activities of the heroine of *Touki-Bouki* are juxtaposed to the throbbing movements of the ocean.

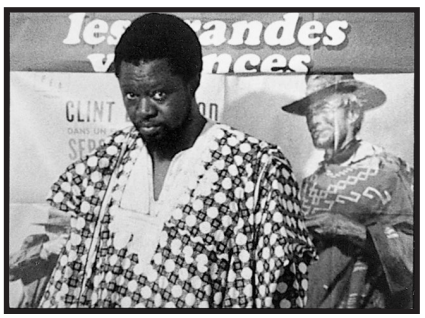
> link one detail to another to put a story together. There is no longer a traditional story-teller in our days, and I think the filmmaker can replace him.[9]

Sembene's use of types (the pauper, the trickster) and certain subjects (magic, abrupt shifts of fortune) harks back to folktale conventions. In *Ceddo*, the legendary quality of the plot and the presence of a commenting griot further signal that the film is to be taken as a contemporary revision of oral tradition (**Video 23.1**).

Related to Sembene's griot conception is the freedom of commentary in his sound track. His own voice dominates *Borom Sarret*, speaking to the audience directly of the character's hopes and disillusionment. *Black Girl* has a remarkable scene in which the illiterate servant has received a letter from her mother. Her French employers, concerned about propriety, begin to write a responding letter for her. We see the husband write a banal letter and hear her protesting inner monologue (**23.30**). Playing between French and the Wolof language, Sembene's films accentuate the clash of modernity and tradition.

Sembene's style remained closer to mainstream realism than did that of other African filmmakers. Djibril Diop Mambéty's *Touki-Bouki* (Senegal, 1973), the most avant-garde film made on the continent during the period, alludes to African folktales while drawing on techniques of European modernist cinema (**23.31**). Similarly experimental was Med Hondo, who made most of his films while in exile in Paris. He began in a surreal vein close to Rocha with *Soleil O* ("O Sun," 1970), which portrays an unemployed African possessed by a vision of a guerrilla revolution sweeping through Asia, Africa, and Latin America. *Les Bicots-négres, vos voisins* ("The Dirty Negroes, Your Neighbors," 1973) reveals the conditions of African workers in France. Both films use collage techniques parallel to those of political modernist films elsewhere, mixing documentary, realistic fiction, animation, photomontages, and direct address (**23.32**).

Hondo was one of the strongest advocates of an African version of Third Cinema. He demanded that film


Les Bicots-négres, vos voisins

23.32 In *Les Bicots-négres, vos voisins*, a narrator links movie Westerns to the colonization of Africa.

reflect popular political struggles and that it convey cultural differences. "The physical time of an Arab or African film is different from a Western film. . . . It's a matter of another mode of breathing, of another manner of telling a story. We Africans live with time, while the Westerners are always running along behind it."[10] Aware of European and American film traditions but determined to represent central aspects of their own cultures, Hondo and his contemporaries sustained a distinctively African approach to political filmmaking throughout the 1970s.

China: Cinema and the Cultural Revolution

The "revolutionary cinema" of the People's Republic of China (PRC) differed sharply from that found elsewhere in the Third World. As in Cuba, a Communist government controlled filmmaking. But, whereas the ICAIC encouraged experimentation, China opted for a narrow, dogmatic conception of revolutionary cinema.

After the 1949 revolution, PRC filmmaking had, like postwar Soviet filmmaking, swung between periods of strict government control and of liberalization (see Chapter 18). During the early 1960s, filmmakers had some latitude, but in 1966, a bizarre shift in policy brought an unparalleled period of repression.

Although Mao Zedong remained the venerated leader of the revolution and chairman of the Communist party, he had become marginal to policymaking. The chairman of the PRC, Liu Shaoqui, and the party's secretary-general, Deng Xiaoping, held the real power. They undertook reforms,

allowing some private enterprise for farmers, giving bonuses to productive workers, and requiring examinations for university admission. Mao, who favored complete equality and no hint of capitalist enterprise, sought to regain control. He decided to exploit the "cult of Mao" in order to destroy the party hierarchy and rebuild it with loyal followers.

In 1966, Mao declared the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," a sweeping program that dominated Chinese society for the next decade. With the help of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), he purged many of his enemies and seized the national newspaper. Soon he controlled Beijing, but strong resistance sprang up elsewhere. Mao then called on high school and university students to form a youth army, the Red Guard. Their task was to attack and humiliate intellectuals, artists, bureaucrats, teachers, and any other proponents of "Western" thinking.

The Red Guard soon closed schools and universities. Students burned libraries and rampaged through museums. Red Guards roamed the country, identifying "enemies" and forcing them to submit to "self-criticism" before a large crowd. Some victims were tortured or executed; others committed suicide or died in prison.

Mao's thought underpinned all debates. Bookstores carried little but his writings. Excerpts were published as *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, a "little red book" printed in more than a billion copies and waved zealously by Red Guards as they carried out his policies.

Mao considered untutored peasants to be the ideal revolutionary citizens. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of city dwellers were sent to farms to perform manual labor and live in primitive dormitories. After this process of "reeducation," citizens were supposed to return home, although many died in the countryside.

By the late 1960s, the party consisted almost entirely of Maoists. Liu had been arrested and later died in prison; Deng was exiled to the countryside. In gaining control, however, Mao had created chaos. Some regions were torn by armed conflict. To settle matters, Mao turned the PLA against the Red Guards, many of whom took their turn in long "rehabilitation" stays in the countryside.

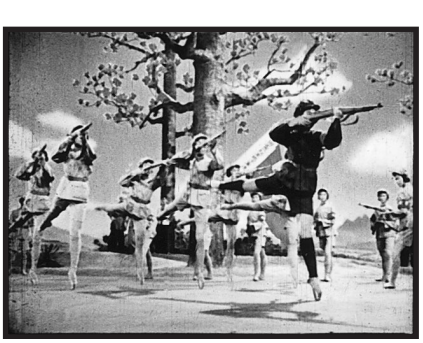
During the Cultural Revolution, the arts were strictly controlled. Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, was part of a group of high officials, later termed the "Gang of Four," who took charge of cultural affairs. A minor film actress during the 1930s, Jiang supervised the creation of a Maoist cinema.

Her first step was to close down the film industry. For the only time in cinema history, a government simply withdrew feature films from audiences. All foreign films and pre-1966 Chinese films were banned, and no new Chinese features were released between 1966 and 1969. The public still went to the movies, but they saw only newsreels, mostly records of Mao reviewing troops or riding in parades.

Jiang and her associates sought an ideologically acceptable approach to fiction filmmaking. They settled on a genre called the *revolutionary model performance film*. Such films were versions of stage works that blended modernized Peking opera (one of Mao's favorite art forms), somewhat traditional ballet, and revolutionary military subjects. These were the only types of features made from 1970 to 1972, and only seven of them were released. The revolutionary model performance films were screened incessantly. Deprived of all other entertainment, audiences saw them over and over; to avoid attending rendered one's commitment to Maoism suspect.

The most famous of these performance films is *The Red Detachment of Women* (1971, Pan Wenzhan and Fu Jie). It is a record of a 1964 ballet, which was in turn an adaptation of Xie Jin's 1961 film (see Mixing Maoism and Tradition p. 357). The ballet, with a score by a collective of composers, told of an actual detachment of female soldiers in the Chinese civil war of the 1930s. The lack of dialogue and the simple action made the story easy for peasant audiences to follow. The characters of *The Red Detachment of Women* represent types familiar from Soviet and Chinese Communist fiction: the sadistic landlord, the good Party leader, the vengeful heroine who must learn Communist discipline. Eliminating psychological development, the plot concentrates on the detachment's training for the climactic battle. The dancers wear traditional ballet slippers and go up on point, yet they also flourish rifles and strike aggressive poses (**23.33**). Chinese filmmakers never embraced the Direct Cinema approach, preferring to use long-tried studio methods reminiscent of 1930s Hollywood. In *Red Detachment*, the performance is shot as if on a theater stage, using artificial trees and backdrops.

In 1973, other types of features began to be made. All emphasized political subjects, with stock characters enacting Maoist doctrine. For example, Mao's belief that strict


The Red Detachment of Women

23.33 A mixture of traditional ballet and Maoist militarism as the soldiers drill in *The Red Detachment of Women*.

university requirements unfairly barred peasants and workers was illustrated in *Breaking with Old Ideas* (1975). An enthusiastic young college principal welcomes students who profess loyalty to the regime. When asked if she is literate, a young rice farmer responds: "Chairman Mao is our liberator." She is admitted.

The Cultural Revolution lasted well into the 1970s. As Mao grew senile, the Gang of Four ruthlessly pursued his policies. After Mao's death in September 1976, Deng Xiaoping, who had been rehabilitated in 1973, took control. The Gang was arrested in October 1976 and convicted two years later.

The Cultural Revolution devastated China. As many as a million people may have died in its turmoil. A generation missed its chance to be educated, and industrial development halted. In the cinema as well, the Cultural Revolution created what Chinese call "the lost ten years." Not until the early 1980s did a recovery become visible (see Chapter 26).

Although politically activist films continued to be made after the mid-1970s, militant Third-Worldism faded. In Latin America, insurgent groups were defeated. The masses were not mobilized, and military regimes terrorized the population. Some Cinema Nôvo directors, the Bolivian Sanjinés, and Chilean and Argentine filmmakers went into exile. In Africa, most countries lapsed into neocolonial states ruled by authoritarian parties and charismatic dictators. Third-Worldism often helped establish a new capitalist class, as the films of Sembene and his African colleagues pointed out.

Mao's Cultural Revolution was discredited with the downfall of the Gang of Four, and the revelation of Khmer Rouge atrocities eliminated Cambodia as a viable model of Asian socialism. The most visible Third World revolutionary activity became international terrorism, often sponsored by Middle Eastern nations.

The 1973 rise in oil prices by the petroleum-producing Arab states dealt most Third World economies a staggering blow. The underdeveloped countries began to accumulate the debts that would haunt them into the next century. After a decade of revolutionary rhetoric, most Third World countries remained impoverished agricultural nations ruled by business leaders and military figures cooperating with the Western powers or the Soviet bloc.

POLITICAL FILMMAKING IN THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLDS

Revolutionary filmmaking had not been confined to the Third World. It had its counterpart in the developed countries as well. As we have already seen (Chapter 20), many European and Asian new waves, such as the Young German Film and the Japanese New Wave, were critical or left wing in their orientation. Revolutionary agendas arose everywhere during the 1960s, and the cinemas of the First and Second Worlds played a part in formulating them.

Eastern Europe and the USSR

The Prague Spring and Its Aftermath The first major political upheaval in the Soviet bloc took place in Czechoslovakia. After internal struggles, in January 1968, reformer Alexander Dubček took control of the Czech Communist party. Dubček encouraged debates, even raising the possibility of a multiparty system. By late June, reform was in the air. More than sixty scientists, artists, and scholars signed the "Two Thousand Words" manifesto, calling for workers' self-management, criticism of party authority, and rejection of old-line Communism.

The "Prague Spring" had enormous influence on culture. "In the last few weeks," the film director Jan Nemeć said, "I have been possessed by such a feeling of joy and liberation—maybe madness—nothing holds me any more."[11] The banned films of 1967 were made available, and New Wave directors felt at liberty to experiment.

But the euphoria was short-lived. On August 20, 1968, the USSR ordered 500,000 Warsaw Pact troops to invade Czechoslovakia. Government officials were flown to Moscow in handcuffs. With Soviet backing, conservatives halted reforms. In April 1969, Dubček's successor Gustav Husák oversaw "normalization"—that is, elimination of the 1968 reforms and punishment of rebellious individuals. Thousands of intellectuals and artists were forbidden to write, perform, or teach. Within two years, almost 200,000 Czechs emigrated.

Officials banned any films that exuded the Prague Spring spirit of social critique. A striking example is Jiří Menzel's *Larks on a String*. Menzel had already established an international reputation with *Closely Watched Trains* (1966) and *Capricious Summer* (1967; see The Czech New Wave p. 406). *Larks on a String* is set in 1948, when, as a title ironically informs us, the working class took power in Czechoslovakia. Professionals, intellectuals, and waiters now sort scrap in a junkyard. Menzel mixes comedy, romance, and satire in his characteristically poignant way. In the opening scene, the hero and heroine portray loyal socialist workers for a staged newsreel; ostentatious posters and banners conceal the junkyard behind them (**Color Plate 23.1**). Completed in 1969 but denied release, *Larks on a String* was

charged with "contempt for the working class" and kept Menzel out of filmmaking for five years.

Normalization forced changes in the Czech film industry. The film-unit production system was abolished, and control was recentralized. One studio head went to prison. The new regime demanded that political subjects be treated in an affirmative, heroic way—a return to Socialist Realism. Expectably, officials complained of the New Wave's experimentation and "pessimism." In 1973, four previously released New Wave films, including *The Firemen's Ball* and *Report on the Party and the Guests*, were banned.

The attacks destroyed the Czech New Wave. Many of the best directors emigrated. Milos Forman had already planned to leave, but the repressions drove out Jan Nemeć, Ivan Passer, Ján Kadár, and others. Of the New Wave filmmakers who stayed, most were denied work until the mid-1970s. For example, Vera Chytilová, director of *Something Different* (1963) and *Daisies* (1966), managed to make the modernist fantasy *The Fruit of Paradise* (1970) before the new freeze set in. For the next six years, she submitted scripts and sought projects. She was put off, denied permission to attend foreign festivals, and finally judged "elitist" and "uncommitted."[12] Not until Chytilová wrote a letter to President Husák charging officials with illegality and sexism was she permitted, in 1976, to return to directing.

For a few months, it appeared that democratic reform could alter a Communist society, but the invasion applied what would be known as the "Brezhnev doctrine," the policy that the USSR would intervene in any satellite showing signs of dissent. The Prague rebellion proved that free discussion could lead to political unrest, and most Communist regimes pulled back from the liberalizing of the mid-1960s.

A parallel debacle took place in Yugoslavia. In Zagreb, intellectuals had launched critiques of Soviet-style Communism since the early 1960s. In the same period, the Central Committee of the Yugoslavian party demanded economic reform. During the events of the spring of 1968, students occupied Belgrade University. Tito intervened to break the strike, and government repression intensified. By 1972, the rising Croatian nationalist movement provoked the government to arrest, try, and purge political dissenters.

Yugoslavian film culture of the late 1960s strongly resembled that of Western Europe. Politically and erotically outspoken, Yugoslavian New Film infuriated conservative factions. Zika Pavlović's *Ambush* (1969) and Krsto Papić's *Handcuffs* (1969) saw traces of the Stalinist past continuing into the present, while Aleksandar Petrović's *The Master and Margarita* (1972) compared current attacks on cinema to Stalinism. The Zagreb Film Festival of 1970 took as its theme "Sexuality as an Effort to Achieve a New Humanism." As pressures increased after 1968, official critics labeled the New Films "black films" because of their "defeatism" and "nihilism."

Dušan Makavejev offered the most scandalous black film of the era in *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971). Like his earlier works, it juggles newsreel footage, extracts from older fiction films, and a story; it is also, centrally and explicitly, about sex. A biography of Wilhelm Reich, a psychoanalyst and radical sex theorist, is mixed with Direct Cinema footage of current erotic practices in the United States, newsreels of the Chinese revolution, and a grotesque story about Milena, a Yugoslavian woman who believes that "Communism without free love is a wake in a graveyard." *WR* epitomizes counterculture irreverence, not least in its outrageous juxtapositions (**23.34**, **23.35**). In suggesting that erotic freedom would revitalize Marxism, Makavejev was attacking Communist prudery head-on.

In the early 1970s, the government denied distribution to *WR*, *The Master and Margarita*, and other black films. Petrović, who had won worldwide fame with *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (1967), was forced out of his post at the Film Academy. The party expelled Makavejev and Pavlović; Makavejev joined the band of wandering directors exiled from Eastern Europe.

WR

WR

23.34, *left* The calculated effrontery of Makavejev's *WR*: in a cult-of-Stalin fiction feature, the leader declaims that the USSR will fulfill Lenin's legacy. This is followed by . . .

23.35, *right* . . . a shot of a patient receiving electroshock therapy.

Poland's cinema experienced a government crackdown like that in Czechoslovakia, but it recovered more easily. In the spring of 1968, the Polish government was debating the need for economic reform. In May, an uprising at Warsaw University was suppressed. The Creative Film Unit system, which had operated since the mid-1950s, was replaced by a centralized organization. Venerated figures like Aleksander Ford were removed from their supervisory positions.

After workers' strikes in the early 1970s, however, party boss Wladyslaw Gomulka was replaced by a more concessive leadership. The freer atmosphere reanimated Polish cinema. The production units were reorganized, with filmmakers having even more control than they previously had. A literature-based cinema won over audiences and solidified the production units. Andrzej Wajda returned to the center of Polish cinema with *Landscape after Battle* (1970), *Wedding* (1972), and *Land of Promise* (1975). Several new talents appeared, most notably Krzysztof Zanussi, a former physics student who brought his scientific training to bear on contemporary dramas in *The Structure of Crystals* (1969), *Illumination* (1972), and *Balance* (1974).

Other Eastern European cinemas flourished in the post-invasion era. In Romania, which had only loose ties to the USSR, the late 1960s saw a liberalization. More experimentation was permitted, and in the early 1970s decentralized production units were formed. The Bulgarian government created a production-unit system in 1968, and three years later it installed new management in the industry. The nation's most celebrated film was Todor Dinov and Hristo Hristov's *Iconostasis* (1969), somewhat similar to Andrei Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* in its echoes of folk and religious art. After 1971, Bulgarian cinema underwent a renaissance, with several films winning international recognition.

It was Hungary, however, that moved to the forefront of Eastern European cinema in the aftermath of the Prague Spring. The economic reforms created in the late 1960s remained intact, and decentralized planning and a mixed economy continued well into the mid-1970s. A critical political cinema continued in Hungary, and the four production units were each making about five films per year. Because directors such as Miklós Jancsó, Márta Mészáros, and István Szabó were closely tied to Western trends, they are considered later in this chapter.

Dissent and Stagnation in the USSR

While there was no "Moscow Spring," the early 1960s spawned a USSR youth movement of sorts. Students scrutinized the history of Communism and debated party conduct. Writers circulated *samizdat* ("self-published") articles and books. When Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia, protesters crowded Red Square.

Facing a declining economy and a conflict with China, Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev sought détente with the West while dealing harshly with dissent at home. Christians and intellectuals were imprisoned or sent to mental hospitals. Physicist Andrei Sakharov's Human Rights Committee was steadily undermined by the secret police. In 1970, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn won the Nobel Prize for literature, but when his novel *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) revealed the horrors of Stalin's prison camps, he was deported.

In cinema, production averaged about 130 features annually. But the new freeze demanded a return to Socialist Realism, now called "pedagogical realism." Energetic factory workers and World War II heroes came back to the screen. Some of the more idiosyncratic directors of the New Wave, such as Vasily Shukshin, produced well- crafted literary adaptations. In the late 1960s, Andrei Konchalovsky had proposed a film on Che Guevara, but he too turned to safe sources.

In the regional republics, however, intense anti-Russian nationalism created a "poetic cinema." Alexander Dovzhenko's peasant lyricism offered filmmakers a distant precedent (see A New Generation: The Montage Filmmakers p. 110). Georgi Shengelaya's *Pirosmani* (1969) used the artist-biography genre to treat a folk painter, a subject that carried nationalistic connotations but also justified experiments in abstract shot design (**Color Plate 23.2**). Similar efforts were Ukrainian Yuri Ilienko's *White Bird with a Black Mark* (1972) and Georgian Otar Iosseliani's *Pastorale* (1977).

Two other directors associated with the poetic tendency emerged as central to the new Soviet cinema. Andrei Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*, suppressed in 1966, premiered in Paris in 1969. After widespread acclaim abroad, it was released in the USSR. By then Tarkovsky had completed his third feature, *Solaris* (1972), widely touted as Russia's answer to *2001: A Space Odyssey* (see Toward an American Art Cinema p. 459). Its ambiguous depiction of the hero's delusions is motivated by its space-travel premise, but typically Tarkovskian are passages of mystical contemplation: weeds coiling under water, an endless freeway, and the awe-inspiring final images (**23.36**).

Solaris

23.36 In *Solaris*, the hero kneels before his father as the camera retreats to a God's-eye perspective.

Tarkovsky wanted to avoid an ideological message: "The image is not a certain *meaning*, expressed by the director, but an entire world reflected as a drop of water."[13]

The reflection of the artist's world is carried to an extreme in *The Mirror* (1975), a poetic blend of childhood memories, documentary footage, and fantastic imagery. As Tarkovsky's voice recites his father's poetry offscreen, the camera slides across a room, moving from a cat lapping a puddle of milk to the mother at the window, tearfully watching the rain. A barn burns in a downpour; a man is almost blown over in a windy landscape; a woman levitates (**23.37**). While the mainstream *A Slave of Love* (Nikita Mikhalkov, 1976) was enjoying worldwide success, Soviet authorities declared *The Mirror* incomprehensible and gave it a cramped, unprofitable release.

Sergei Paradzhanov remains the most vivid example of how the personal became political in Soviet cinema. After his Ukrainian feature *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (see Young Cinema in the Soviet Union p. 404) won international success, Paradzhanov used his new fame to protest the treatment of dissidents. In 1968, he was arrested on charges of "Ukrainian nationalism"; after his release, he was transferred to an Armenian studio, where he made *The Color of Pomegranates*.

Although the script is based on the life of the Armenian poet Sayat Nova, a prologue tells us that the film will not be a conventional biography. Long-take shots frame characters, animals, and objects in rigid frontal tableaux (**Color Plate 23.3**). Editing serves merely to link these shots or to cut jarringly into the static portraits. The film's mise-en-scène presents Sayat Nova's poetic imagery: waterlogged books opened out to dry on rooftops, carpets bleeding as they are washed, chicken feathers scattering over the dying poet. Although Paradzhanov's style differs drastically from Tarkovsky's, both directors contemplate the changing textures of objects through time.

The Mirror

23.37 *The Mirror*: the enigma of memory and fantasy.

The Color of Pomegranates was probably the most shockingly experimental film made in the USSR since the late 1920s. It was immediately shelved, although a shorter, revised version achieved limited release in 1971. Forbidden to direct, Paradzhanov fought back. He wrote a pamphlet on his problems and those of Soviet cinema. In January 1974, he was accused of homosexuality, trafficking in stolen art objects, and "incitement to suicide." He was sentenced to several years at hard labor.

In the Eastern bloc, Socialist Realist policy obliged the artist to serve society—or rather its representative, the Communist party. The major Eastern European directors such as Chytilová, Jancsó, and Makavejev believed that their visions were in harmony with some socialist position, even if that position was not currently in favor. But the poetic cinema of Tarkovsky and Paradzhanov presented the artist's vision as independent of all needs of the collective. Their highly personal films boldly challenged the Soviet orthodoxy and echoed trends in the West that sought political liberation in the unconstrained imagination of the individual.

Political Cinema in the West: A Culture of Dissent

The year of the Prague Spring, 1968, also marked the height of social protest in Western countries. As in the Third World and Eastern Europe, young people played a key role.

In the mid-1960s, many students were questioning authority and rejecting traditional political values. The New Left, a diverse movement proposing an alternative to orthodox Soviet Marxism, sprang up in North America and Europe. What was called the counterculture, a loose assortment of alternative lifestyles, also sometimes aligned with forces for political change. Both tendencies were galvanized by the Vietnam War, which intensified after US planes began bombing the country in 1965. In the years that followed, activists protested the war by resisting the draft, occupying university buildings, and fighting police.

Other social movements emerged. One was Black Power, which sought to go beyond the nonviolent tactics of the US civil rights movement. The Black Panthers, founded in 1966, called for a militant struggle against racism, while also incorporating community food and shelter programs. During the same period, movements for women's liberation and gay /lesbian rights strengthened as well.

By the end of 1967, many social-protest movements had converged. There began two years of political upheaval

FILM ACTIVITIES DURING THE MAY EVENTS IN PARIS

French film culture was deeply involved in the upheavals of 1968. Early in February, the government tried to remove Henri Langlois as curator of the Cinémathèque Française. Resnais, Truffaut, Godard, Bresson, Chabrol, and others coordinated demonstrations of hundreds of filmmakers. On February 14, 3,000 people demonstrating in support of Langlois clashed with police. Thanks to press coverage and threats from film companies, Langlois was reinstated.

As the May uprising unfolded, Godard spearheaded an effort to halt the Cannes Film Festival, leading demonstrators to occupy the theaters. Truffaut called on all to support the events in Paris: "The colleges are occupied! The factories are occupied! The stations are occupied! It's political action on an unprecedented scale! And you want this activity to stop at the doors of the festival? . . . There must be solidarity!"[14] After Godard and Truffaut halted a screening by holding the curtains closed, the Cannes Film Festival shut down.

In Paris, students at the state film school IDHEC quickly began making newsreels and ciné-tracts (see Engaged Cinema: Collective Productions and Militant Films). The issues broadened as cinéastes and cinéphiles launched a critique of film under capitalism. A large number of professional film workers established the États Généraux du Cinéma (EGC). The EGC aimed to create an alternative French system of production, distribution, and exhibition. Members, many of them technicians and projectionists, went on strike "to denounce and destroy the reactionary structures of a cinema which has become a commodity."[15]

The EGC called for public ownership of the film industry, workers' control of production, abolition of censorship, and elimination of the government's Centre Nationale de Cinématographie (see The Industry Recovers). The EGC prepared several projects, involving Malle, Resnais, and other influential figures, and it laid plans for autonomous production units (akin to those in Eastern Europe) that could undertake noncommercial projects. Members also stressed the need for educating viewers in new ways of watching film.

Throughout May and June, the EGC held sessions. It quickly became a filmmaking cooperative, turning out documentaries over the following two years. But without government support, there was no way to implement the ambitious EGC proposals. As Charles de Gaulle regained power, most film personnel resumed work as usual. In July, many of the filmmakers involved in the EGC formed the Société des Réalisateurs ("Society of Film Directors"), which took as its goal the defense of artistic freedom. Beyond this, the May movement created some long-term political commitment, a "parallel cinema" of militant engagement, and alternative production and distribution structures.

unparalleled in the West since World War II. The events of 1968 led many to believe that Western society was on the brink of social revolution.

In that year, universities in Spain, Germany, England, Italy, and Japan were convulsed by student demonstrations, many of which turned into battles with police. Similar clashes took place on hundreds of American campuses. The political outrage intensified after Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert Kennedy were assassinated.

Events in Paris during spring 1968 typified the radical energies and frustrations of the period. Students disaffected with official left-wing parties split into Maoist or Trotskyite factions. Students confronted university administrators at Nanterre and the Sorbonne, only to be met with tear gas and truncheons. After half a million students took to the streets, the universities were occupied, and ten million French citizens went on strike in solidarity. During the 1968 upheaval, French film culture plunged into radical politics (see Film Activities during the May Events in Paris box).

The May events led many to think that de Gaulle's government might fall in the June elections, but he won in a landslide. Life gradually returned to routine as the government cracked down on extreme-left groups.

In April 1970, President Richard Nixon's widening of the Vietnam War into Cambodia touched off a new wave of protest in the United States. Nearly 400 colleges went on strike, students on many campuses burned their ROTC buildings, and sixteen states called out the National Guard. Two students were shot and killed at Mississippi's Jackson State University, and four more were killed at Ohio's Kent State University.

Already, however, the radical movement was losing unity. By 1970, the student left in most countries had failed to ally itself with working-class issues. In the United States, the Black Panthers and the New Left fell out. Many

feminists, gays, and lesbians saw the New Left as oppressive and formed their own organizations. During 1969 and 1970, some radicals, convinced that only violence could defeat "the system," formed terrorist cadres, such as the Weathermen in the United States, the Red Brigade in Italy, and the Red Army Faction (Baader-Meinhof) in Germany. Often modeling themselves after Third World guerrillas, these groups brought bombing, kidnapping, and political assassination to Western capitals in the 1970s.

Radical political movements steadily lost their authority as New Left ideas were incorporated into more mainstream socialist and Communist parties. The excesses of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the revelations of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* suggested that Communism led to totalitarian rule. With the middle class governing the Western democracies, there was a growing awareness that social change was more likely to come through issue-oriented, grassroots activism.

So the militancy of the late 1960s evolved into micropolitics. Activists concentrated on particular lifestyles and issues—cooperatives, communes, squatters' movements, and the ecology movement. "Working within the system" ceased to be a reproach. German leftists adapted a Maoist phrase, calling for social change by "the long march through the institutions."

The growth of gay and lesbian movements shows how radical energies could change concrete situations. In 1969, gay men in New York City fought off a police raid on the Stonewall Inn. Throughout the period from 1969 to 1973, gay and lesbian activism flourished in Britain, Canada, Australia, West Germany, and France. Groups changed laws and altered attitudes toward homosexuality.

During the 1970s, women's liberation broadened into the feminist movement. Some participants hoped for a radical restructuring of social consciousness, but others sought step-by-step progress toward equality and justice. Italian feminists helped liberalize divorce laws, while across Europe and North America similar groups altered abortion statutes. In country after country, women's shelters, clinics, legal services, child-care centers, and bookstores created an alternative "woman's culture."

Most broadly, both the militant radicalism of the late 1960s and the micropolitics of the 1970s changed fundamental attitudes. The goals of universities, the social and sexual inequality within Western democracies, and matters of sexual orientation became part of public awareness as never before.

Filmmakers participated vigorously in the politicization of culture. Three broad tendencies emerged from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s. First, *engaged cinema* uncompromisingly aligned itself with revolutionary social change. Its purpose was explicitly propagandistic, and its favored genre was the documentary. Second, alongside engaged cinema there emerged a *political modernism*. This tendency, an outgrowth of the postwar art cinema and Third World trends such as Cinema Nôvo (see Chapter 20), created a radical aesthetic that fused left-wing politics with innovative forms and styles. Third, even the commercial fictional film and the mainstream art cinema bore the traces of the changing political culture.

Engaged Cinema: Collective Productions and Militant Films During the 1960s and early 1970s, a cinema of political engagement, addressing itself to concrete social problems and arguing for radical social change, emerged on a scale not seen since the 1930s. A project might be financed by a political organization, as when the Vietnam Veterans Against the War supported *Winter Soldier* (United States, 1972). Sometimes an individual filmmaker or small group might scrape up funding from donors; this occurred with Noriaki Tsuchimoto's series of films on Japan's Minamata pollution tragedy (e.g., *Minamata: The Victims and Their World*, 1972). In rare cases, independent producers arranged funding for radical work. In France, Marin Karmitz's MK Productions had supported militant cinema since 1964.

Particularly characteristic of the era was the attempt to create filmmaking collectives. Militant filmmakers would band together and work in subgroups on separate projects. Rental fees helped finance more films. Britain's Cinema Action and Berwick Street Collective, Italy's Militant Cinema Collective, Denmark's Workshop, Sweden's New Film, Belgium's Fugitive Cinema, Greece's Band of 6, the Chicago-based Kartemquin, and other groups utilized the collective mode of production. Often the group's collective structure itself embodied left-wing ideals of equality and shared responsibility.

One prototype of the engaged-cinema collective was the US group Newsreel. In late 1967, students aligned with Students for a Democratic Society decided to make films that would counter the mainstream media's representation of protests against the Vietnam War. This group became New York Newsreel. Early in 1968, another group formed San Francisco Newsreel.

The Newsreel logo—the flickering word synchronized with machine-gun fire—announced the militant, confrontational quality of the films. The Newsreel groups specialized in coverage of individual events, such as the occupation of a campus, a strike, or a demonstration. Beginning as a "full democracy," the Newsreel collective soon adopted a steering-committee system whereby every film was screened for the entire membership and was released only if a majority supported it.

A parallel development took place in France. During May 1968, striking film workers created *ciné-tracts*, short 16 mm films made simply and circulated for a few weeks. These sometimes led to the formation of collectives. For example, the SLON Group made its first film, *À bientôt j'espère* ("Soon, I Hope"), codirected by Chris Marker and Mario Marret, in 1967; it dealt with a strike at La Rhodia, a textile factory in Besançon. When the factory's workers were dissatisfied with the result, they formed their own cooperative, the Medvedkin Group, and made *Classe de lutte* ("Class of Struggle"), released in 1969. SLON (later ISKRA) remained robust, however. Other production units sprang up, each with its own ideological alignments. Such collectives formed France's "oppositional," or "parallel," cinema.

Collectives usually depended on alternative distribution and exhibition structures. Marin Karmitz created a distribution company and ran three Parisian theaters. In the United States, New Day Films and Women Make Movies circulated feminist works, while Newsreel distributed films from Third World countries along with its own projects. Other independent distribution agencies included Belgium's Cinélibre, Holland's Free Circuit and the feminist Cinemien, Sweden's Cinema of the People, and Britain's The Other Cinema.

Like Solanas and Getino of Cine Liberación, engaged filmmakers in the West sought to change the context in which their work was shown. Some avoided traditional theaters, preferring that the films be screened in clubs, union meetings, and campus or community centers. Film festivals cooperated. France's Hyères festival created as a showcase for young directors, became an international meeting place for engaged cinema. In 1972, the first New York Women's Film Festival was held, quickly followed by similar events in Toronto and elsewhere.

New film journals—*Jump Cut* and *Women and Film* in the United States, *Champ libre* in Canada, *Filmkritik* and *frauen und film* in West Germany, and *Cinéthique* in France, among many others—also promoted recent radical filmmaking. Older magazines, such as the US *Cineaste* and the Parisian *Cahiers du cinéma*, moved to a left political position.

Even though radical leftism declined in the mid-1970s, engaged filmmaking remained central to the micropolitics of the era. A June 1979 alternative-cinema conference in New York assembled more than 400 political activists working in film and video in the United States. In some countries, government liberalization led to funding for militant film. The new Labour government in Britain assisted Liberation Film and Cinema Action, while in France the regional Maisons de la Culture allotted money for local media groups. Some parallel distribution and exhibition circuits proved successful in promoting films about nuclear power, day care, ethnic rights, and similar issues.

In the United States and Great Britain, feminist filmmaking pioneered the turn to issue-centered, grassroots problems. By 1977, 250 women's films had been produced in the United States alone. Although some feminist films were made under the auspices of New York Newsreel between 1968 and 1969, the first major Newsreel effort came from the San Francisco wing. *The Woman's Film* (1970) was followed by New York Newsreel's *Janie's Janie* (1971). Other feminist engaged films of the period were Julia Reichert and Chuck Klein's *Growing Up Female* (1970) and Kate Millett's *Three Lives* (1970). British feminist cinema was initiated by the London Women's Film Group (founded 1972), and it often sought to link women's concerns with labor issues.

As the international women's movement grew, films on rape, self-defense, and housekeeping were paralleled by explorations of women's history, the latter most widely seen in the US films *Union Maids* (1976) and *With Babies and Banners* (1978) by the Women's Labor History Project. Women's filmmaking groups emerged in other countries as well, with France's Musidora, Italy's Feminist Film Collective, and Australia's Sydney Women's Film Collective being among the most active.

Techniques and Forms of Engaged Cinema In general, engaged filmmakers adopted the techniques and forms established by Direct Cinema documentary in the late 1950s. The new 16 mm technology of lightweight cameras, portable tape recorders, and faster film stocks could be used for agitational moviemaking, often by people without formal training. But the engaged filmmakers typically avoided purely descriptive observation of the type advocated by Richard Leacock (see The United States: Drew and Associates p. 426). Direct Cinema technique supplied evidence, but the film as a whole was likely to be defiantly rhetorical in confronting its audience.

Direct Cinema techniques were useful in capturing spontaneous events. *Some of Your Best Friends* (1971) records gay activists' invasion of a psychiatric conference. More broadly, Pierre Perrault's *A Country without Good Sense!; or, Wake Up, My Good friends!!!* (1970) surveys political agitation in Quebec. Engaged filmmakers also discovered the power of long-form interviews, in which most of the most of the film consists of talking heads. Feminists created a genre of "film portraits," often in an effort to present positive role models. *The Woman's Film* consists largely of five intercut interviews, while *Three Lives* and *Growing Up Female* let individuals report on their experience in lengthy close-ups. This strategy, recalling Shirley Clarke's *Portrait of Jason* (see Direct Cinema and Its Legacy p. 513),

Word Is Out

23.38 *Word Is Out*: an interviewee sits by a poster indicating her feminist position.

In the Year of the Pig

23.39 On the sound track, Lyndon Johnson reviews his trip to Saigon: "We never heard a hostile voice, and we never shook a hostile hand"; on the image track, he towers over the crowd (*In the Year of the Pig*).

Underground

23.40 Filming into a mirror, Lampson, Wexler, and De Antonio interview Weathermen fugitives who went into hiding after their Greenwich Village bomb factory exploded (*Underground*).

is also at work in the gay and lesbian "confessional" films. *Word Is Out* (1977; **23.38**) assembles interviews to provide a panorama of gay and lesbian life.

Throughout the 1970s, some feature-length engaged documentaries played commercial theaters. In the United States, Peter Davis's *Hearts and Minds* (1974), Cinda Firestone's *Attica* (1974), Jill Godmilow's *Antonia* (1974), *Word Is Out*, *Union Maids*, and *With Babies and Banners* drew broad audiences.

De Antonio and Radical Scavenging The engaged filmmaker who consistently achieved commercial recognition was Emile De Antonio. His first film, *Point of Order* (1963; see Innovative Trends p. 422) was devoted to the congressional hearings investigating Senator Joseph McCarthy. *Point of Order* showed that mainstream news-footage shots could sustain a politically critical film with no nudging from an anonymous voice-over narrator. *Rush to Judgment* (1966), a brief for a multiple-assassin theory of President John Kennedy's death, brought interviews into the compilation mix.

"Radical scavenging" allowed De Antonio to include footage that was too controversial for its original users. *In the Year of the Pig* (1969), an analytical history of the Vietnam War, drew on material shot for television that was too grisly or embarrassing to broadcast. ("Out-takes," De Antonio commented at the time, "are the confessions of the system."[16]) *In the Year of the Pig* makes its case through a variety of techniques. In the hallucinatory opening, over brief images of battle and peasants' suffering, the drone of airplanes and helicopters rises chillingly. The rest of the film puts the argument in analytical terms, juxtaposing expert and eyewitness testimony with news footage of speeches, ceremonies, battles, and Vietnamese life. De Antonio's editing uses one interview to contradict another and undercuts official accounts by contrary evidence. Although the film has virtually no voice-of-God narration, interviewees' remarks become voice-over commentary for the images (**23.39**).

In the Year of the Pig gained a wide audience on campuses and in some theatrical venues. So did *Millhouse: A White Comedy* (1971), in which De Antonio's compilation technique satirizes Richard Nixon. The more serious *Underground* (1976) provided an opportunity to reflect on developments since the 1960s. In 1975, while five Weathermen members were sought by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), De Antonio, Mary Lampson, and Haskell Wexler filmed lengthy interviews with them, interspersing their memories with biographical and newsreel footage (**23.40**).

A comparable sense of stocktaking informs *Milestones* (1975), by Robert Kramer and John Douglas. Kramer was a founder of New York Newsreel who also developed a semifictional approach to New Left politics in the independent features *In the Country* (1966), *The Edge* (1968), and *Ice* (1970). Like the earlier features, *Milestones* was shot in Direct Cinema fashion, using improvised performances. Featuring several protagonists and running over three hours, the film is a broad assessment of the successes and failures of the New Left.

Political Modernism In seeking to rouse the viewer to political reflection or action, the engaged filmmaker drew on Direct Cinema technology and the tradition of leftist documentary. Other militant filmmakers explored modernist traditions. These directors combined politically radical themes and subjects with aesthetically radical form, pushing further the impulses of Brazil's Cinema Nôvo and Cuba's postrevolutionary cinema.

The political modernists took inspiration from the Soviet Montage cinema of the 1920s. Eisenstein and Vertov became models of political consciousness and formal innovation. Even more pervasive was the influence of the Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht (see Brecht and Political Modernism box). In addition, many radical filmmakers sought to surpass the postwar art cinema. Its techniques had become fairly familiar and its mildly critical humanism seemed reformist, not revolutionary. The political modernist director would transform character subjectivity, reflexivity, and ambiguity in the name of radical critique. At the forefront of this political modernism stood Jean-Luc Godard and Nagisa Oshima.

Godard and the Dziga-Vertov Group Before the May events, Godard was already fusing political criticism with modernist aesthetics. His films mounted an almost sociological examination of French life, accompanied by harsh attacks on American foreign policy (e.g.,

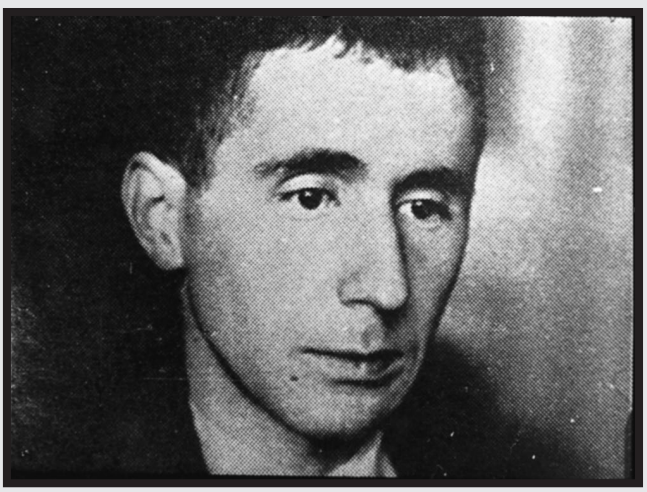
BRECHT AND POLITICAL MODERNISM

Although Bertolt Brecht (**23.41**) was closely identified with Soviet Communism in his lifetime, his creative work contributed to a strong "unorthodox Marxist" tradition in the arts. For thirty years his plays explored many forms of theater, some explicitly political, others closer to musical, parable, and "problem drama": *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1929), *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1941), *The Good Woman of Szechuan* (1943), and others.

Brecht's film *Kuhle Wampe* (1932, directed by Slatan Dudow; see Germany p. 267) was not as influential for modern cinema as were his theatrical productions and his writings. The hugely successful 1950s tour of his East German troupe, the Berliner Ensemble, introduced European audiences to Brecht's theater. When he died in 1956, his influence was still growing.

In a pungent, often humorous, style, Brecht attacked traditional, or "Aristotelian," theater, on the grounds that it tries to absorb the audience completely. The spectator is supposed to identify with individual characters, feel their emotions, and accept the premises of the play's world. A committed Marxist, Brecht saw art as inevitably political. Impressed by Eisenstein's *Potemkin*, he also believed that playwrights would cease to focus on individuals and would eventually represent mass movements.

Brecht contrasted the drama of hypnotic empathy with Asian theater and the boxing match, which encourage spectators to take a more detached attitude to what they see. Brecht proposed several techniques that might accomplish this: breaking the play into episodes, interspersing titles, separating text from music or performance, and letting the performers speak the lines as if quoting them. These and other devices created the *Verfremdungseffekt*, often translated as "alienation effect" but better rendered as "estranging" or "defamiliarizing." Through this effect, the spectator would evaluate the action critically and see larger historical forces at work behind it. The spectator could then start to understand how to change the world that created the characters' problems.



La Chinoise

23.41 A shot in Godard's *La Chinoise* shows a photo of Brecht.

Brecht's influence emerged in cinema in the early 1960s, notably in Godard's *Vivre sa vie* (1962; see 20.15). His ideas energized a generation of political modernist filmmakers who sought to break the "illusion of reality" that classical fiction films created for the spectator. Filmmakers used collage structures, disjunctive editing, stylized framing and acting, and interspersed titles to achieve "anti-illusionist" works that would provoke reflection.

Brecht's influence also extended to less avant-garde films, such as *How I Won the War* (1967), *Oh What a Lovely War!* (1969), and *O Lucky Man!* (1973). Some critics claimed that even Sirk, Hitchcock, and Ford were "Brechtian." In many cases, filmmakers and critics recast and distorted the dramatist's ideas. Nevertheless, the versions of Brechtian theory in circulation during the 1960s and 1970s remain central to understanding critical political cinema of the era.

Un Film comme les autres

23.42 In *Un Film comme les autres*, Godard appropriates advertising imagery and then attacks it through his own graffiti-like comments.

Lotte in Italia

23.43 Godardian flattening of space put at the service of political critique in *Luttes en Italie* ("Struggles in Italy," 1969). Compare 20.16.

Masculine-Feminine, 1966, and *Two or Three Things I Know about Her*, 1967). In *La Chinoise* ("The Chinese Girl," 1967) a Maoist study group turns into a terrorist cadre. *Weekend* (1967) shows the bourgeoisie, preoccupied with greed, murder, and gruesome sexuality, overtaken by an absurd guerrilla band while Third World emigrants stand by awaiting their chance for revolt. With the eruptions of 1968, Godard turned his energies to a more severe and cerebral political modernism.

During the May events, Godard produced several ciné-tracts, consisting of demonstration footage and still photographs, usually with phrases scribbled over each one (**23.42**). His films of 1968 alternate such material with dialogues of characters exploring political positions. After *One Plus One* (aka *Sympathy for the Devil*, 1968), which juxtaposes a Rolling Stones rehearsal with staged scenes depicting political repression and Black revolution, Godard joined the young Communist Jean-Pierre Gorin in forming the Dziga-Vertov Group.

The collective marked itself as politically modernist, declaring that it would struggle not only against political repression but also against "the bourgeois concept of representation."[17] Renouncing his previous films, Godard converted to Maoism and support for Third World revolution. Because his name guaranteed funding, usually from European television, the Dziga-Vertov Group turned out several films quickly, notably *British Sounds* and *Wind from the East* (both 1969). The group dissolved when Godard had a severe motorcycle accident, but after his recovery he and Gorin made *Tout va bien* ("Everything's Fine") and *Letter to Jane* (both 1972), which are linked with the earlier work.

Each Dziga-Vertov Group film is an assemblage of diverse material, juxtaposing Direct Cinema footage (street scenes, labor actions, conversations) with titles and highly stylized tableaux (**23.43**), often with direct address to the camera. Unlike Godard's earlier works, where such material interrupts a more or less coherent narrative, the Dziga-Vertov Group films largely lack stories. Rapid montages of still photos and blank frames alternate with long takes, either completely static or slowly tracking right or left. On the sound track, voices read extracts from Marx or Mao or exhort the viewer to criticize the image. Noises, as in the lengthy tracking shot down an auto assembly line in *British Sounds*, also assault the audience. Impossible to consume as entertainment or as engaged documentary, the films carry the modernist project to an abrasive extreme.

Tout va bien withdraws from this forbidding extreme, subscribing instead to Brecht's notion of "culinary"—that is, pleasurable—political art. The film has, for one thing, a fairly clear story. A radio journalist (Jane Fonda) and her lover (Yves Montand), a director of TV commercials, accidentally get locked into a factory occupied during a strike. The experience makes them rethink their relation to each other, to the aftermath of May 1968, and to French society in 1972. Yet this story is "estranged" by a host of Brechtian devices: male and female voice-overs that plan how the film is to be made, hands signing checks to the stars, to-camera interviews by the characters, a cutaway set (**23.44**),

Tout va bien

23.44 *Tout va bien*: a factory on strike, rendered as a dollhouse set.

Death by Hanging

23.45 In an abstract, purified set, R is about to be executed (*Death by Hanging*).

virtuoso left-and-right tracking shots along supermarket checkout counters, and alternate versions of scenes. *Tout va bien* remains a prototypical Brechtian film; its reflexivity invites the audience to consider the political implications of film form and style.

After 1972, Godard created a media facility, Sonimage, in Grenoble, France, with the photographer Anne-Marie Miéville. The male–female dialogue of *Tout va bien* became central to their mid-1970s work. *Ici et ailleurs* ("Here and Elsewhere," 1976), for example, returns to the assemblage form of the Dziga-Vertov Group work. Several Godard-Miéville films include video imagery, which allows for still more varied juxtapositions of image, sound, and written language.

The Radical Oshima For most critics of the decade from 1967 to 1977, Godard personified the political modernist, creating a formally and ideologically exploratory cinema. The work of the Japanese director Nagisa Oshima was not as widely seen, but it was no less aggressive and disturbing.

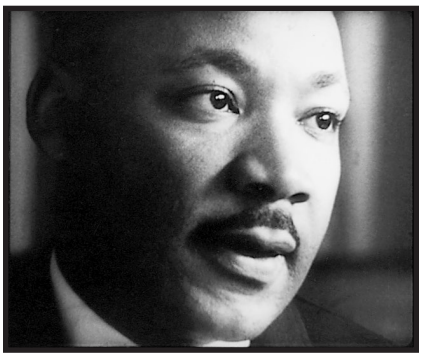
The Japanese New Wave filmmakers had begun producing socially critical films in the late 1950s (see The Japanese New Wave p. 412). A decade later, Oshima and other directors recorded and supported current social activism against the Vietnam War, education policies, and renewal of the American-Japanese security treaty. Oshima made several films about student politics, notably *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (1968) and *He Died after the War* (1970). He also turned his attention to the social problems of Koreans (in *Death by Hanging*, 1968) and of Okinawans (in *Dear Summer Sister*, 1972), groups who were suffering discrimination at Japanese hands.

Oshima also continued to explore modernist techniques of disjunction and distancing. He became especially drawn to strategies of repetition, replaying actions or episodes from different perspectives and offering none as definitively true or accurate. Twenty minutes into *Three Resurrected Drunkards* (1968), the film begins again, as if the projectionist has put on the wrong reel, and continues, repeating each shot before slight diversions from the original slowly appear. The device makes the three Japanese students "become" Koreans.

Repetition is also central to *Death by Hanging*, based on an actual criminal case. R, a young Korean convicted of rape and murder, is about to be hanged. To convince him of his guilt, police and bureaucrats stage elaborate reenactments of his crime until they (perhaps) kill an innocent victim themselves. Only then does R accept his guilt, "for the sake of all Rs." The film's stylized sets (**23.45**) and grotesque comedy stress its central issues: Koreans as an oppressed minority, capital punishment as political control, and sexual murder as an inevitable outcome of social repression (**Video 23.2**).

Unlike Godard, Oshima alternated very experimental films such as *Three Resurrected Drunkards* and *Death by Hanging* with more accessible works such as *Boy* (1969), the story of parents who make a living by shoving their child into traffic and then collecting payment for his injuries. *Ceremonies* (aka *The Ceremony*, 1971) is likewise fairly traditional in its treatment of the familiar Oshima theme of how society frustrates young people's sexual drives. The story plots the political and erotic intrigues within a family ruled by a rapacious father. Oshima's insistence that exploitation, incest, and guilt pervade the Japanese extended family forms a critique of the serene domestic life presented in Ozu's work.

Stylistic Trends of Political Modernism The works of Godard and Oshima are central cases, but they do not exhaust all the tendencies within political modernism. There were at least four other trends: collage construction,



I Am Curious (Yellow)

23.46, 23.47 Through editing, Martin Luther King, Jr., seems to be looking at Lena, heroine of *I Am Curious* (*Yellow*).

fantasy and parable, a stylized presentation of myth and history, and minimalism.

An exemplary modernist strategy, *collage construction* has origins in Cubist painting. Broadly, the collage film joins bits of footage that are not intrinsically related. Instead of making the linkage seem natural or unnoticeable, as in Hollywood's use of stock footage, the modernist filmmaker emphasizes the disparities among the images or sounds, forcing the viewer to make an imaginative leap. We have already seen this strategy used for poetic effect in Joseph Cornell's *Rose Hobart* (ca. 1936), Chris Marker's *Letter from Siberia* (1957), and Bruce Conner's short films (see The Experimental Compilation Film p. 441). But in the late 1960s, many filmmakers exploited it for political critique.

Radical filmmakers working with fictional narrative typically employ the collage principle in a more linear fashion. Such films set up a story and then elaborate on it with footage drawn from other realms. Brecht and Dudow's *Kuhle Wampe* pioneered this approach in a mild way, and we have already seen it in Makavejev's films (see Yugoslavian New Film p. 408). Very similar to *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* is Vilgot Sjöman's *I am Curious (Yellow)* (1967) and *I Am Curious (Blue)* (1967). Sjöman's story of a young woman seeking sexual liberation is treated in Direct Cinema terms (with a good deal of reflexivity), but it is interrupted by titles and cutaways (**23.46**, **23.47**).

Political modernism after 1967 also embraced fantasy and parable. The return of Luis Buñuel to international fame rekindled interest in the Surrealist tradition, which had nursed revolutionary aspirations since the 1920s. Many viewers considered *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972) and *The Phantom of Liberty* (1974) to be sly comments on official repressions of the 1968 rebellions.

Closer to the ferocity of Buñuel's first films is *Viva la muerte!* ("Long Live Death!" 1971), by the Spanish playwright Fernando Arrabal. A Spanish boy fantasizes his father's torture at the hands of the Church and the army. The boy is also obsessed with his mother, whom he imagines bathing in the blood of a slaughtered bull. Arrabal's cheerfully perverse fantasies put the film in the modernist tradition, and he savors gruesome imagery. A shot of the father being tortured is rendered peculiarly beautiful through tinting (**Color Plate 23.4**). Traces of the Surrealist impulse are also evident in Alejandro Jodorowky grotesque *El Topo* ("The Mole," 1971) and his mystical *The Holy Mountain* (1973).

Less indebted to Surrealism in the use of fantasy was Pier Paolo Pasolini. *Hawks and Sparrows* (1965) initiated his interest in contemporary political parables, but his subsequent work in this vein was more scathing. *Teorema* (1968) shows a blankly handsome young man taken in by a bourgeois family; one by one, their lives are changed in ways at once sordid and miraculous. *Pigpen* (1969) sets side by side two stories about perverse appetites: a young mountain climber becomes a cannibal, and an industrialist is eaten by pigs. In these films, Pasolini's technique has a Buñuelian detachment, throwing into relief the absurd spectacle of a disintegrating society.

Political modernist filmmakers also employed a stylized presentation of history and myth. Instead of portraying a past event neutrally, or simply retelling a myth, the radical filmmaker might treat it through nonrealistic techniques and then draw analogies with contemporary political struggles.

For example, Pasolini consistently teased a political critique out of his adaptations of classical myths and contemporary history. In *Medea* (1969), among masked choristers and pink rocks, the classical heroine embodies the conflict between colonization and the people it dominates. Pasolini's last film, *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), stages the final days of Italian Fascism as a spectacle out of the Marquis de Sade. Here Pasolini's technique of *pasticchio* ("mixing"; see Italy: Young Cinema and Spaghetti Westerns p. 397) frames mutilation and sexual assault in classical compositions and sets them to the music of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

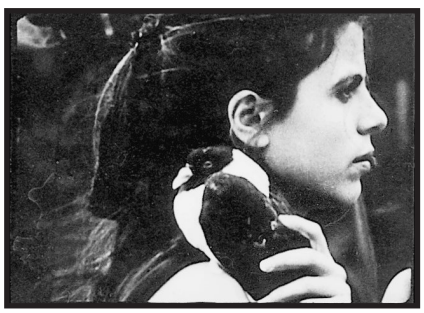
In the wake of 1968, Hungarian Miklós Jancsó's treatment of history also became more defiantly unrealistic.

He created political allegories fusing past, present, and future events. *Agnus Dei* (1970) shows the 1919 Hungarian revolution in the countryside, concentrating on an epileptic priest and a mysterious officer who may represent the Fascism that will overtake Europe. Jancsó's subsequent films extend his examination of power to the entire history of the West. The plot against Julius Caesar (*Rome Wants Another Caesar*, 1973) and Elektra's legendary struggle with Aegisthos (*Electra, My Love,* 1974) become ritualized dialogues and ceremonial encounters, rendered in elaborate choreography and sinuous long takes. (*Electra, My Love* is composed of only thirteen shots.)

Red Psalm (1971), for many critics Jancsó's masterpiece, balances these generalizing tendencies with national elements and more idiosyncratic symbolism. Although no actual event or period is designated, the story portrays a struggle of Hungarian peasants against landowners and soldiers. Followed by a zooming, panning, and tracking camera, victims and oppressors float through an abstract, expanding and contracting space (**23.48–23.53**). Beginning with a peasant woman holding a dove and ending with the same woman brandishing a rifle, *Red Psalm* draws on revolutionary symbols. When someone is killed, the victim may return to life, now wearing a red flower. *Red Psalm* becomes a pageant that restages the revolutionary tradition in the light both of Brecht and of art-cinema modernism.

A stylized treatment of history and myth was also explored by the Greek director Theo Angelopoulos. Influenced by Mizoguchi, Antonioni, and Dreyer, Angelopoulos began his career under the dictatorship of the Greek generals in the late 1960s. His first feature, *Reconstruction* (1970), displayed a by-then conventional reshuffling of present and past, as flashbacks interrupt the investigation of a murder. But the cryptic dialogue, which supplies little information about character relations, and the camera's dwelling on still compositions and landscapes (**23.54**) make the film seem dedramatized even by art-cinema standards.

Angelopoulos produced *The Traveling Players* (1975), a four-hour panorama of Greek political strife between 1939 and 1952. Over the years, a theater troupe performs the same play, a mythical piece that comments upon the changing political situation. As he did in *Reconstruction*, Angelopoulos rearranges the time sequence, but now he blends historical periods within a single shot. The soliloquies and performances, along with Angelopoulos's long-shot framings, yield a dry


Red Psalm

23.48 One phase of one shot in *Red Psalm*: from a woman with a dove . . .

Red Psalm

23.49 . . . the camera pans left to a soldier's pistol . . .

Red Psalm

23.50 . . . before glimpsing a balladeer drifting into the background.

Red Psalm

23.51 The camera follows him to a group of peasants . . .

Red Psalm

23.52 . . . who surround the soldier . . .

Red Psalm

23.53 . . . and entice him into a dance.

anti-illusionism consistent with early 1970s interpretations of Brecht (**23.55**).

The spareness of Angelopoulos's technique relates him to another trend of post-1968 political modernism. Some filmmakers pursued a strategy of *minimalism*—sparse narratives rendered in a rigorous, ascetic style.

Outstanding examples are found in the work of Chantal Akerman, one of the most influential women directors of the era. Akerman's minimalism derived less from European sources than from encounters with Warhol's work (see Andy Warhol and Pop Cinema p. 446) and North American Structural cinema (see Chapter 24). *Je, tu, il, elle* (1974) was a stripped-down narrative of sexual encounters rendered in long takes. Her most influential film was *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975; the title gives the main character's name and address in Brussels).

Over 225 minutes, Akerman presents three days in the life of a housewife who works as a prostitute in her home. The film's first half presents Jeanne's life in a style as meticulous as her housekeeping. The low-level camera, centered down a corridor or across a kitchen table, records her dressing, washing dishes, greeting a customer, and making a meatloaf. After one client's visit, however, Jeanne's routine mysteriously breaks down and she starts to make errors. Finally, she stabs a client and goes to sit at the dining table—virtually the only time we see her relax (**Video 23.3**).

Jeanne Dielman is a landmark in feminist modernism. By slowing plot action to a standstill, Akerman obliges the viewer to look at the empty intervals and domestic spaces that mainstream cinema skips over. In one sense, *Jeanne Dielman* moves toward fulfilling Neorealist Cesare Zavattini's dream of recording eight hours in a person's life; the film could even be considered an expansion of the sequence of the maid's awakening in *Umberto D.* (see *Umberto D.*: The Maid Wakes Up p. 320). But Akerman treats domestic space as harboring sexual repression and financial exploitation. Housekeeping is woman's work, as is prostitution (as Jeanne's address on "Commerce Pier" indicates).

Akerman's minimalist style recalls Bresson, Ozu, Mizoguchi, and experimental cinema, but she uses spare technique for purposes of political critique. The static camera and the rectilinear, low-height compositions estrange the viewer from the action while dignifying household chores as aesthetically and socially significant (**23.56**).

Despite the diversity within political modernism, the mid-1970s saw the trend drop off, at least in 35 mm filmmaking. Although the exploration of myth and history continued, the collage form and surrealist fantasy virtually vanished. Minimalism was adapted to less formally radical ends. As left-wing positions became assimilated into mainstream politics, radical production groups were difficult to sustain. Oshima disbanded his company Sozosha in 1973, a year after the end of Godard and Gorin's Dziga-Vertov Group. The scandals surrounding Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* (1974) and Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* (1975) were triggered by their sexual content, not modernist technique or political stance. Godard announced his return to more accessible narrative in *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* ("Save what you can [of your life]," aka *Every Man for Himself*, 1979). By the end of the 1970s, most political modernists were making less radical, and less radically experimental, works.

Reconstruction

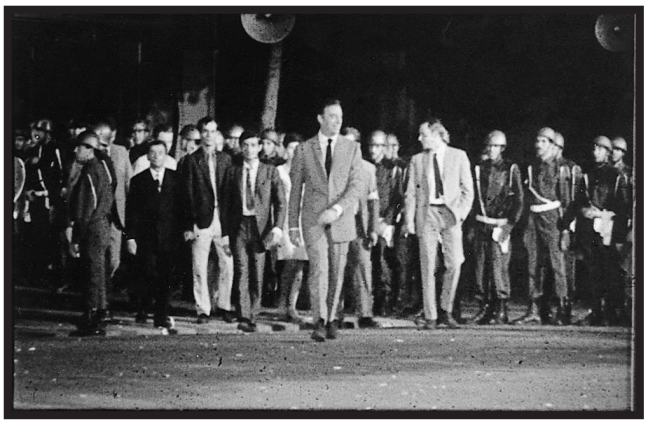
23.54 Bus passengers stop to relieve themselves in *Reconstruction*.

The Traveling Players

23.55 Moving through history and staging a classic play in small towns, the traveling players become the conscience of Greek culture (*The Traveling Players*).

Jeanne Dielman

23.56 *Jeanne Dielman*: household routine made unfamiliar through use of static long takes.



Z

23.57 A handheld shot follows the dissident to his assassination in *Z*.

The Politicization of Mainstream Narrative and the Art Film During the 1960s and 1970s, mainstream European and Asian cinema became politicized to some degree. In Italy, directors were more willing to investigate the Fascist past; even spaghetti Westerns became more partisan (e.g., Sergio Leone's *Duck, You Sucker!*, 1972). In Sweden, Bo Widerberg made *Adalen 31* (1969), a study of labor strife. In Japan, the "pink films" of Koji Wakamitsu became frenzied studies of sexual repression and terrorism. The British *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* (1971) inserted male homosexuality into a domestic melodrama.

Political Genres The most commercially successful integration of left-wing politics and classical narrative cinema took place in the genre of the political thriller. Here a plot would be built around the investigation of an actual government scandal, mentioned by name or thinly disguised. The political thriller offered the excitement of a detective film and the shock of an exposé. The inclusion of major stars also ensured a film's wide circulation.

The political thriller had been pioneered by Francesco Rosi in *Salvatore Giuliano* (1961), and he continued to exploit it in *The Mattei Affair* (1972), *Lucky Luciano* (1974), and *Exquisite Corpses* (1975). Rosi's films intercut the inquiry with key events in the past while drawing upon documentary techniques, such as newsreel footage, dates, and explanatory captions. Although the genre was almost exclusively male territory, Nadine Trintignant's *Défense de savoir* ("Right to Know," 1973) was a comparable study of collusion between police and the extreme right.

The most famous exponent of the political thriller was Costa-Gavras. A Greek who became a French citizen, Costa-Gavras started as a director of thrillers (*The Sleeping Car Murder*, 1965) before he made *Z* (1969), one of the most widely seen political films of the era.

"Any similarity to actual events, or persons living or dead, is not coincidental. It is intentional." Signed by Costa-Gavras and scriptwriter Jorge Semprún, the opening title of *Z* announces a political agenda. The film retells the events surrounding the assassination of a popular opponent of the dictatorial Greek colonels. The investigating magistrate, a political moderate, exposes the right-wing conspiracy, but then he falls victim too. By 1969, many New Cinema techniques—glimpsed flashbacks, slow motion, freeze-frames, handheld shots (**23.57**)—had become easily understood, and Costa-Gavras used them to create suspense and rapid-fire action. The presence of the star Yves Montand helped *Z* gain international recognition.

Costa-Gavras then made *The Confession* (1970), a recreation of a political purge in postwar Czechoslovakia; *State of Siege* (1973), an attack on American attempts to oust the Tupamaro guerrillas of Uruguay; and *Special Section* (1975), an exposé of French collaboration with the Germans during World War II. The films rested upon a body of research, but critics from all political persuasions faulted the action-packed intrigues and the schematic hero/villain characterizations. Costa-Gavras replied that only by working within mainstream entertainment could he bring information to a broad audience. He refused the slow pace and intellectual demands of Brechtian modernism:

> The general public is not sufficiently trained to reflect upon a film while it is being projected. They have become accustomed to the rapid pace of American cinema, and I have to confess that I feel closer to this rhythm too. It's only after the film that the spectator can truly reflect upon it. Or reject it.[18]

For several decades, Costa-Gavras remained the dean of the political thriller (*Missing*, 1982; *Music Box*, 1989; *Le Capital*, 2012; and *Adults in the Room*, 2019).

Other genres became political vehicles. Louis Malle's period drama *Lacombe Lucien* (France, 1974) shows a young peasant seduced by Fascist politics, while in the more elliptical *Pascal Duarte* (Spain, 1975) Ricardo Franco traces how an equally violent youth becomes a rebel during the Spanish civil war. Comedy also assimilated left-wing themes. In France, Diane Kurys made the highly popular *Diabolo Menthe* (1977), an affectionate portrait of post-1968 youth, following it two years later with *Cocktail Molotov*, set in the days of May. Political subjects were taken up in Italian comedies as well, most famously in Lina Wertmuller's *The Seduction of Mimi* (1972), *Love and Anarchy* (1973), and *Swept Away* (1974). *Seven Beauties* (1976) offers a critique of Italian male pride, showing how a cocky hustler must humble himself to survive in a Nazi prison camp (**23.58**).

Marco Ferreri's grotesque comedies offer a more deadpan, enigmatic attitude. *Dillinger Is Dead* (1969) builds enormous suspense as it observes a businessman coming home late, preparing a meal, watching home movies, and murdering his wife. In this masculine version of Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman*, the minute depiction of the husband's habits reveals the pettiness of his business ethos. In Ferreri's *La Grande bouffe* ("The Big Blowout," 1973), partying businessmen kill themselves through gorging and fornication.

Politicizing the Art Film Along with such mainstream filmmakers, directors working within the art cinema were affected by the climate of the era. Avoiding the extremes of Brechtian alienation and stylization, many established directors nevertheless continued the tradition of postwar modernism while incorporating political material. Carlos Saura, for instance, had already made *The Hunt* (1965), an attack on the machismo ethos in Spain. *The Garden of Delights* (1970) took a more Buñuelian slant, showing a perverse ruling class living between fantasy and reality (**23.59**).

In *If . . .* (1968), Lindsay Anderson intensified the critique of British society that had driven the Kitchen Sink films (see Great Britain: Kitchen Sink Cinema). An upper-middle-class boys' school becomes a microcosm of social revolution as four radical students rebel against repressive officials. *If . . .* adopts Godardian techniques by introducing major segments with intertitles; its alternation of color and black-and-white film stock (done to economize) becomes a mildly Brechtian distancing device. The final scene, in which the boys fire from a roof into a crowd, refers to the ending of Jean Vigo's anarchistic *Zero for Conduct* (see Fantasy and Surrealism: René Clair, Pierre Prévert, and Jean Vigo p. 249). With its fantasy sequence and concluding freeze-frame, *If . . .* invoked conventions of the contemporary art cinema.

Seven Beauties

23.58 *Seven Beauties*: the street hustler forced to bargain for his comforts in a prison camp.

The Garden of Delights

23.59 The imaginary life of the upper class, attacked in *The Garden of Delights*.

Postwar European films had used strongly demarcated flashbacks to compare past and present; *Hiroshima mon amour* had made the time shifts more rapid and ambiguous; directors of the 1960s had pushed the technique to fragmented extremes. In the 1970s, the flashback continued to be a tool for exploring political change across history. Hungarian Istvan Szabó employed the device to chronicle the lives of people in an apartment building in *25 Fireman's Street* (1973). Through a rhythmic alternation of eras, André Téchiné's *Souvenirs d'en France* ("Memories of France," 1974) chronicles the effects of labor struggles on a family over several decades. Karoly Makk's *Love* (Hungary, 1970) uses swift montage and abrupt flashbacks to contrast the lives of two women waiting for the return of a political prisoner.

Bernardo Bertolucci, always in touch with contemporary trends, employed flashbacks in more innovative ways in *The Spider's Stratagem* (1970). Here characters look exactly the same "now" as they did thirty years before, and

The Spider's Stratagem

23.60 *The Spider's Stratagem*: standing in the past, Draifa tells the young Athos in the present about his father (the man at the window in the background); the technique serves the thematic purpose of questioning the need for sanctified historical heroes.

Jonah, Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000

23.61 In an epilogue set in the future, Jonah scribbles on the commune's mural (*Jonah, Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000*).

from the past they speak to someone in the present (**23.60**). Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (1971) is perhaps the exemplification of the politicized art film. It presents a precise play among memory, fantasy, and reality in its portrayal of a sexually repressed man driven to become a Fascist political assassin.

Directors of the postwar generation reflected on the new era in distinct ways. Federico Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969) was widely interpreted as his sour commentary on current social decline, and in *Amarcord* (1973) he produced a half-nostalgic, half-mocking portrayal of Fascist spectacle. A colossal steamship holds the villagers spellbound, and a gigantic head of Mussolini looms frowning over a parade (see Color Plate 19.2). Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970) made common cause with student revolution through a hallucinatory love-in at Death Valley and a series of shots detailing the slow-motion explosion of an American home. *The Passenger* (aka *Profession: Reporter*, 1975) shifted to the Third World, where Antonioni's characteristic questions about identity are played out in a political intrigue involving arms shipments.

The Swiss director Alain Tanner declared himself also stirred by the May events, and throughout the ensuing decade his films reflected upon the legacies of 1968. With Michel Soutter, Claude Goretta, and others, Tanner founded the Groupe Cinq ("Group 5") in 1968 in order to make films for Swiss television. Tanner's early features, influenced by British Free Cinema and the Nouvelle Vague, lay firmly in the European art-cinema tradition, using reflexivity and flashback structures. Thereafter he specialized in wistful studies of how the absence of radical change blocked personal relationships. His most famous film was *Jonah, Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000* (1976). Here eight "children of May" (*Ma*x, *Ma*rco, *Ma*rguerite, *Ma*deline, and so on) form a commune in the era of dashed hopes and political "normalization." Black-and-white images represent their utopian desires, and Tanner ends the film with an ambivalent image of the future (**23.61**).

If Tanner focuses on middle-class characters longing for change, the brothers Paolo and Vittorio Taviani concentrate on the revolutionary aspirations of the peasantry and the working class. The Tavianis undertook a populist retelling of Italian revolutionary history in *Subversives* (1967), *Under the Sign of Scorpio* (1968), *St. Michael Had a Cock* (1971), and *Allonsanfan* (1974). Their first international success was *Padre padrone* ("Father-Boss," 1977), the story of an illiterate shepherd boy who becomes a scholar of linguistics through an obstinate revolt against his father. The film begins with the author of the original autobiography whittling a branch as he introduces the tale. He then hands the stick to the actor playing the father (**23.62**), who enters the schoolroom to fetch his son, and the fictional story begins. Apart from introducing a Brechtian distance, the scene suggests that the son, now grown, realizes that harsh authority is necessary if youth is to define itself.

A New Prominence for Female Directors Attention to women's concerns gave a new impetus to the careers of female art-cinema directors. The Hungarian Márta Mészáros had made several short films during the 1960s. Her first feature, *The Girl* (1968), was followed by several others, notably *Riddance* (1973), *Adoption* (1975), and *Nine Months* (1976). Mészáros's work probes intimate relationships while considering women's relation to social forces, particularly class structure. Taken together, her films dramatize a vast range of feminine experience, from school, dating, and marriage to work, childbirth, and

Padre padrone

23.62 *Padre padrone*: the stick is transferred.

family life. She particularly explores mother–daughter conflicts. Her style emphasizes realism and authorial commentary, both inflected by close-ups of her heroines' bodies; in *Adoption*, she builds an entire sequence out of women's hands at work in a factory.

Agnès Varda had been directing since the 1950s, though her fame came only with the rise of the Nouvelle Vague (see New Cinema: The Left Bank p. 394). She was active in the cinematic left, making a short on the Black Panthers and contributing to the collective film *Far from Vietnam* (1967). After *Lions Love* (1969), a relaxed celebration of the American counterculture, Varda made *One Sings, the Other Doesn't* (1976). Like many political films of the mid-1970s, it takes stock of the previous decade—here, by tracing the course of two women's friendship from 1962 to 1974. Wanting to focus attention on abortion and childbearing as seen from her liberal feminist viewpoint, Varda deliberately aimed *One Sings* at a wide audience. "In France, our film has already been seen by 350,000 people. . . . If the meaning of the film and its feminist point of view is even half or two-thirds as strong as that of a more radical film, at least we've gotten a lot of people *thinking*, and not in the wrong direction."[19]

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw new women directors emerge within the art cinema. In France, Nelly Kaplan, who had been Abel Gance's assistant since 1954, made her first feature. *The Pirate's Fiancée* (aka *A Very Curious Girl*, 1969) shows a young village woman exploited by the local men until she begins blackmailing them with tape recordings of intimate secrets. Liliane de Kermadec's *Aloïse* (1974) launched the career of Isabelle Huppert, who plays a woman imprisoned for opposing World War I. Several French actresses took up directing, notably Diane Kurys, Anna Karina, and Jeanne Moreau. In Canada, the experimental filmmaker Joyce Wieland made the reflexive melodrama *The Far Shore* (1976). Some filmmakers focused on particular feminist issues, while others dealt with subjects of broader political concern, including the "politics of everyday life."

On the whole, mainstream cinema and art cinema adapted to the political culture of the post-1968 era. Classical narrative conventions absorbed engaged themes and subject matter, especially in the political thriller and the comedy. Art-cinema directors who retreated from the extreme experimentation of political modernism nevertheless took micropolitics and the culture of dissent to be fruitful subjects. Tanner, calling himself "marginal" within commercial filmmaking, spoke for many: "My position is not to be as radical as Godard, but to try to force the commercial world to open their doors to outside experiences."[20] Radical political modernism left the realm of 35 mm commercial filmmaking in the late 1970s. Most politicized fictional filmmaking in the Western world worked within the bounds of classical or art-cinema narrative. Political modernism survived longer in the experimental 16 mm sector (see Chapter 24).

New Cinema in West Germany: The Political Wing

The "New German Cinema," a phrase coined in the early 1970s, denotes an even more amorphous group than most new cinemas. The label covers filmmakers pursuing very different agendas. Several directors did not practice critical political cinema (see Chapter 26). But those who took up left-wing filmmaking vividly sum up trends of the late 1960s and after.

The Oberhausen manifesto of 1962 (see Young German Film p. 401) stimulated some socially critical filmmaking, particularly for television, but not until 1968 did left-wing students at Berlin's Institute of Film and Television launch a series of engaged documentaries and fiction films aimed at working-class audiences. More ambitious were the films of the "Berlin School," which echoed the German proletarian films of the late 1920s (see Germany p. 267) in their focus on working-class life. Rejecting the idealized realism of the Berlin School, the feminist Helga Reidemeister concentrated on documenting the domestic life of the working class, notably in *The Purchased Dream* (1977), a compilation from four hours of super-8mm material that a family had shot.

Political Modernism: Kluge, Syberberg, and Straub/Huillet Political modernism was also a strong force in the New German Cinema. The 1968 upheavals and their political culture strengthened the Brechtian documentary drama practiced by playwrights Peter Weiss and Rolf Hochhuth. In film, political modernists continued the social critique implicit in much Young German Film of the early 1960s, but they gave it a more radical edge in response to the rise of the counterculture and the New Left.

Alexander Kluge, a moving force in the Young German Film (see Young German Film p. 401) exemplifies the collage trend in political modernism. By intercutting fiction, documentary, written titles, and other material, his films continued the strategies of *Yesterday Girl* (1966), confronting the

Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed

23.63 *Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed*: a circus acrobat pirouettes on Leni's head, thanks to Kluge's framing.

Hitler: A Film from Germany

23.64 The phantasmagoric blend of cinema, music, and German history (*Hitler: A Film from Germany*; production still).

The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach

23.65 Impersonally rendered musical performance in *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*.

spectator with gaps "in which fantasy can take root." "The film is composed in the head of the spectator; it is not a work of art that exists on the screen by itself."[21] Kluge hoped that this countercultural openness would permit the film to become less a preplanned message than the basis of a dialogue between filmmaker and audience.

Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed (1968) was a reaction to the radical students at the Berlin Film Festival who pelted Kluge with eggs and charged him with elitism. The story of Leni Peickert's attempt to create a new kind of circus is interrupted by news photos, newsreels, shots from Eisenstein's *October*, color footage, and references to current ideas that only through a "work of mourning" could Germany come to terms with its Nazi past. The circus of Leni's imagination (**23.63**) never comes to pass, and she winds up working as a television producer. In its open-textured way, *Artists under the Big Top* stresses the difficulty of utopian political change and suggests that only a "long march through the institutions"—here, existing media conditions—will lead to social change.

The alternation of documentary and fiction within Kluge's films takes place in a more theatrical fashion in the work of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg. Syberberg came to notice with a series of Direct Cinema documentaries in the late 1960s, but his most famous films are the trilogy *Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King* (1972), *Karl May* (1974), and the eight-hour *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977). The spirit of Brecht, whom Syberberg has called his "foster father," mingles with a Wagnerian giganticism in the first and last of these works. Swirling smoke, vast auras of colored light, and mournful music enfold monumental tableaux representing the twilight of German culture (**23.64**). The *Hitler* film's reflexivity, with references running from Thomas Edison and Leni Riefenstahl to *Citizen Kane*, makes it a history of the cinema in which Hitler, turning politics into mythical drama, becomes "the greatest filmmaker of all time."

Probably the most controversial practitioners of political modernism in the New German Cinema were Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet. After *Not Reconciled* 1965; (see Young German Film p. 401), they made the feature-length *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968). In one sense, it employs the collage aesthetic, assembling documents from Johann Sebastian Bach's era, staged scenes, and authentic performances. It is also a remarkable effort in minimalism. Straub and Huillet present undramatic, fragmentary episodes from Bach's life and use static shots or a slightly moving camera to record sustained performances, never showing the audience (**23.65**).

Moses and Aaron

23.66 *Moses and Aaron*: the protagonists sing, backed by an invisible chorus.

As in *Not Reconciled* and later works, they use only direct sound, thereby capturing the specific auditory character of each locale. From one perspective, the film resembles *Artists under the Big Top* in being a "materialist" study of artistic labor, with Straub and Huillet suggesting that Bach's music arose from particular social and political conditions.

The combination of collage construction, direct sound, and ascetic treatment of narrative returns in *History Lessons* (1972), an adaptation of a Brecht novel, and the empty landscapes of *Fortini/Cani* (1977). Straub and Huillet also explore minimalist ways of adapting theater pieces. *Othon* (1969) uses the handheld camera to present a classical French play staged in contemporary Rome, while the opera *Moses and Aaron* (1974) is played out in a desert arena with stylized arrangements of solo singers and chorus (**23.66**). Opposed to all forms of entertainment cinema, Straub and Huillet's films interrogate artistic tradition, probing classic novels and plays for contemporary political implications. *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* is dedicated to the people of Vietnam; *Moses and Aaron*, to a terrorist.

Mainstream Politicized Cinema The more commercially successful New German films adapted political commentary to the conventions of mainstream cinema. The most prominent genres were the *Arbeiterfilm* ("worker film"), which used realistic storytelling technique to portray the life of the contemporary working class, and the *Heimatfilm* ("homeland film"), which focused on rural life.

Among the many directors working within the art cinema, Volker Schlöndorff stands out. Schlöndorff attracted international attention by codirecting *The Lost Honor of Katherina Blum* (1975) with his wife, Margarethe von Trotta. The film shows a woman accused of aiding a terrorist and hounded by the police and the scandal-mongering press. Throughout most of the film, the viewer is led to believe Katherina is an innocent victim. Once she has gained the viewer's sympathy, the plot reveals that love led her to help the young man. Classical storytelling strategies coax the audience to sympathize with a subversive act.

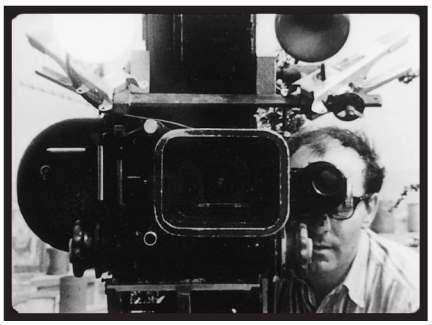
After another film with Schlöndorff, von Trotta began directing on her own. *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* (1977) pursues the narrative strategy of *Katherina Blum* by aligning the audience with a feminist robber on the run. In a period when terrorism, plane hijackings, and assassinations created headlines, such a focus on a criminal woman had a vivid political impact.

Von Trotta's career exemplifies the extent to which West Germany's production subsidy system enabled women directors to work in numbers unparalleled in other nations. Many of them produced politically inflected art films. For example, Helma Sanders-Brahms's *Violence* (1971) is an "anti-road movie," alternating static road maps with a tale of how two assembly-line workers kill an immigrant. In an Arbeiterfilm, *The Employee* (1972), Sanders-Brahms traces a computer programmer's descent into madness, while her *Last Days of Gomorrah* (1974) shows a future society in which television gratifies all desires.

Fassbinder: The Provocateur Rainer Werner Fassbinder was perhaps the best-known director of the New German Cinema, partly due to his aggressive personality and self-destructive lifestyle. He was influenced by the French New Wave and the political modernism that intensified in the late 1960s. Beginning as an actor, playwright, and theater director, Fassbinder revealed a taste for grotesque comedy, splashy violence, and strong realism of characters' regional dialects. Yet he rejected the Brechtian theory favored by Kluge, Straub, and others. He insisted that politically critical art had to engage the spectator's feelings. "With Brecht you see the emotions and you reflect upon them as you witness them but you never feel them . . . . I let the audience *feel and think*."[22]

After his early, strongly Godardian short *The Little Chaos* (1966), Fassbinder made eleven films with the Antiteater, a troupe of actors and technicians. Some of the films recast Hollywood genres, while others show the influence of the Nouvelle Vague and Straub and Huillet. Fassbinder then acquainted himself with Douglas Sirk's Hollywood melodramas (see The Melodrama p. 301), which he took as a model of a socially critical cinema that was also emotionally engaging. He was struck by the implausibly upbeat endings (he called them "unhappy happy ends") and by the way that Sirk blocked full identification with the characters. With *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971) Fassbinder initiated a second phase in his work, that of domestic melodramas. Once more he proved highly prolific, using rapid shooting schedules and low budgets to turn out several features, notably *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Fear Eats the Soul* (1973), *Effie Briest* (1974), and *Fox and His Friends* (1974).

23.67 *Katzelmacher* (1969): loafing couples, shot in a flat, frontal manner.



23.68 *Far from Vietnam*: the director as laconic and detached commentator.

23.69 *Germany in Autumn*: the director as confused and dispirited participant.

Early in his career Fassbinder often framed figures in a sober, mug-shot fashion (**23.67**). In his Hollywood-revisionist phase, he chose unusual angles and striking color schemes. His reliance on continuity editing kept the drama paramount, yet he dwelled on gazes, distant views, and statuesque character poses. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* takes place entirely in the overstuffed apartment of a fashion designer, and like Sirk, Fassbinder uses strongly accented décor to comment on his characters' relationships (**Color Plate 23.5**).

The early Antiteater films experiment with narrative, while the later political melodramas are gripping, emotion-laden stories aimed at a broader public. Most of Fassbinder's films are about power. He often focuses on victimization and conformity, showing how members of a group exploit and punish outsiders. Fassbinder insists that the victim often accepts the standards the group applies, so he or she comes to believe that the punishment is deserved. Ali in *Fear Eats the Soul* literally internalizes the racial prejudice he suffers, collapsing from an ulcer—a common illness of immigrant workers (see **Video 23.4**).

Coming after the failures of 1968, Fassbinder's work is often interpreted as acknowledging the impossibility of radical change. No Brechtian aesthetic could promise a social revolution. The movement of Fassbinder's career from anarchistic and severe political modernism to works that use the less disturbing conventions of Hollywood and the art cinema reflects a general trend within European critical political cinema during the 1970s.

The same change is conveniently summarized in two European films from the beginning and the end of the period. In 1967, thirteen left-wing directors, mostly French, collaborated on *Far from Vietnam*. The film sought to mobilize intellectuals against the war by a series of episodes—some fictional (e.g., Resnais's), some compiled from newsreel footage (e.g., Marker's), one essayistic (Godard's; **23.68**). In 1978, fourteen German directors, coordinated by Kluge, made *Germany in Autumn.* Like *Far from Vietnam*, it brings together disparate tendencies within current filmmaking. But a decade later the hope is not to change international policy. The goal is to understand national life in a climate of terrorism and right-wing oppression. Certain episodes, particularly Fassbinder's drug-hazed confrontation with his lover, dramatize the extent to which the political had become personal (**23.69**). *Germany in Autumn* exemplifies the turn from sweeping activism toward micropolitics, while indicating that critical filmmaking remained central to the 1970s political culture of dissent.

REFERENCES

1. See H. Stuart Hughes, *Sophisticated Rebels: The Political Culture of European Dissent, 1968–1987* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 3–14.
2. Quoted in Aruna Vasudev, *The New Indian Cinema* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1986), p. 29.
3. Quoted in Jean Franco, "South of Your Border," in Sohnya Sayres et al., eds., *The 60s without Apology* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 324.
4. Manuel Puig, "Cinema and the Novel," in John King, ed., *On Modern Latin American Fiction* (New York: Noonday, 1987), p. 283. See also Puig's novel *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth*, trans. Suzanne Jill Levine (New York: Vintage, 1981).
5. Quoted in Julianne Burton, "Revolutionary Cuban Cinema, First Part: Introduction," *Jump Cut* 19 (1978): 18.

6. "Film Makers and the Popular Government: Political Manifesto," in Michael Chanan, ed., *Chilean Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1974), p. 84.
7. Quoted in Sylvie Pierre, *Glauber Rocha* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1987), p. 180.
8. Jorge Sanjinés and the Ukamau Group, *Theory and Practice of a Cinema with the People*, trans. Richard Schaaf (Willimantic, CT: Curbstone, 1989), p. 43.
9. Quoted in Noureddine Ghali, "An Interview with Sembene Ousmane," in John D. H. Downing, ed., *Film and Politics in the Third World* (New York: Autonomedia, 1987), p. 46.
10. Abid Med Hondo, "The Cinema of Exile," in ibid., p. 71.
11. Quoted in Tomáš Mottl, "Interview with Jan Nemeć," in *The Banned and the Beautiful: A Survey of Czech Filmmaking, 1963–1990* (New York: Public Theatre, 15 June–5 July 1990), p. 46.
12. Vera Chytilová, "I Want to Work," *Index on Censorship* 5, no. 2 (summer 1976): 17–20.
13. Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (London: Faber, 1989), p. 110.
14. Quoted in Alomée Planel, *40 Ans de festival: Cannes, le cinéma en fête* (Paris: Londreys, 1987), p. 142.
15. Quoted in Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), p. 123.
16. Quoted in Colin J. Westerbeck, Jr., "Some Out-Takes from Radical Film-Making: Emile De Antonio," *Sight and Sound* 39, no. 3 (summer 1970): 143.
17. Quoted in Abraham Segal, "Godard et le groupe Dziga-Vertov," *L'Avant-scène du cinéma* 171–172 (July–September 1976), p. 50.
18. Quoted in John J. Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras: The Political Fiction Film* (Philadelphia, PA: Art Alliance Press, 1984), p. 46.
19. Ruth McCormick, "*One Sings, the Other Doesn't:* An Interview with Agnès Varda," *Cineaste* 8, no. 3 (1978): 28.
20. Quoted in Jim Leach, *A Possible Cinema: The Films of Alain Tanner* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989), pp. 30–31.
21. Quoted in Stuart Liebman, "Why Kluge?" *October* 46 (fall 1988): 13–14.
22. Quoted in John Sandford, *The New German Cinema* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980), p. 102.

CHAPTER 24

Near Death

DOCUMENTARY AND EXPERIMENTAL FILM SINCE THE LATE 1960s

Tower

Documentary cinema was deeply involved in the political activism of the 1960s and 1970s, and this impulse did not wane in the decades that followed. Filmmakers around the world responded to social crises that demanded to be recorded and interpreted. Yet not all documentarists pursued political projects. Thanks to new technologies and methods of distribution, documentaries were on display as never before. Whatever the message or method, filmmakers reached broader audiences through broadcast television, theatrical release, festival screenings, cable transmission, home video formats, websites, and streaming. The prospect of creating a documentary seen by millions of viewers was a major development in film history.

The Direct Cinema impulse to capture real events with minimal interference continued (See Direct Cinema p. 426) but filmmakers blended its techniques with more traditional methods. The result was a new, fairly standard documentary format that could be applied to any subject. At the other extremes, some documentarists began questioning the very possibility of adequately recording reality.

Some experimentalists embraced social criticism, but in general avant-garde cinema turned inward, toward a reflexive, form-centered movement known as Structural Film. For many observers, this was a logical culmination of experimental cinema's history. Eventually, reactions against Structural Film led to other options, particularly experiments in narrative.

Just as documentarists found broader audiences than ever before, avant-gardists discovered that their work had appeal in the artworld, that network of museums, galleries, and tastemakers devoted to painting and sculpture. Sometimes, artists in those media followed in the footsteps of Léger and others (see Abstract Animation p. 152) and began making films themselves.

DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

Direct Cinema and Its Legacy

Direct Cinema became the most powerful force in documentary. The veterans David and Albert Maysles made one of the most important American cinéma-vérité films, *Salesman* (1969), a dogged chronicle of a Bible salesman begging and bullying prospective customers. For Allan King's *A Married Couple* (Canada, 1969), the director and crew lived with a Toronto family and shot over seventy hours of film; unexpectedly, the filmmakers documented the marriage's disintegration.

Direct Cinema found wide audiences in the emerging genre of *rockumentaries*. With the success of Donn Pennebaker's Bob Dylan film *Don't Look Back* (1966) and *Monterey Pop* (1968), filmmakers realized that lightweight cameras and direct sound recording made it possible to shoot appealing films quickly and comparatively cheaply. *Woodstock* (1970) and *Let It Be* (1970) were records of single, memorable events, while other films were structured around tours. Both tendencies met in the most provocative instance of the genre, *Gimme Shelter* (1970). The Maysles brothers intercut a Rolling Stones tour with a single concert in which the camera records a Hell's Angel fatally stabbing a member of the audience. The whole action is framed by scenes of the brothers reviewing the footage while Mick Jagger looks on (**24.1**).

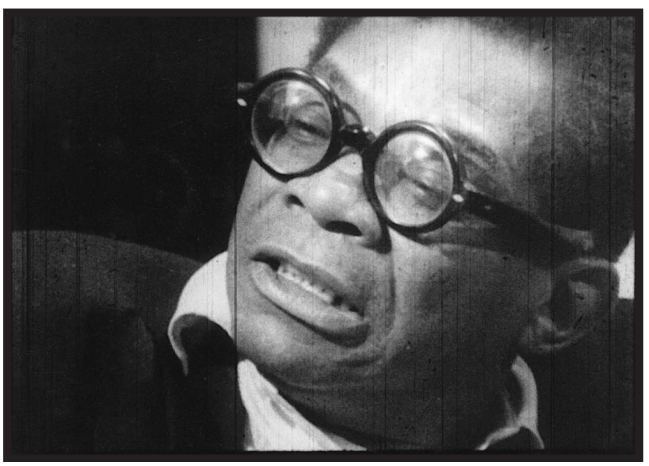
Mercilessly parodied in *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984), the rockumentary proved to be the most theatrically successful documentary genre. Aimed at young moviegoers, it offered performances and sound quality unavailable on broadcast television. By the time Jonathan Demme made *Stop Making Sense* (1984), the concert had become secondary to the filming; David Byrne storyboarded the Talking Heads' performance. Finnish fiction filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki pushed the rockumentary to its absurdist limit, scheduling the Leningrad Cowboys ("the worst rock 'n' roll band in the world") alongside the Soviet Red Army Ensemble in a concert filmed as *Total Balalaika Show* (1993).

Some filmmakers questioned Direct Cinema's claim to capture reality without manipulation. *David Holzman's Diary* (1967) appears to be an actual record, but it is completely fictional. Director Jim McBride seeks to show that the fly-on-the-wall technique is no guarantee of truth. Similarly, Shirley Clarke's *Portrait of Jason* (1967) at first seems an instance of pure Direct Cinema. Clarke records long monologues of a Black homosexual prostitute, and, in the manner of Jean Rouch, she hovers offscreen asking Jason increasingly probing questions. But Clarke also criticizes Direct Cinema's selectivity and invisible editing by keeping to a single camera position, using long takes, and acknowledging shot changes by letting the screen lose focus. Thus *Portrait of Jason* resembles the work of Warhol (see Andy Warhol and Pop Cinema p. 446): an exhibitionistic performer is berated by others (here, his friends offscreen) and collapses in psychic pain (**24.2**).

William Greaves's *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* (1969–1971) questioned the spontaneity of Direct Cinema techniques through layers of presentation. In New York's Central Park, a camera crew shoots actors testing for a fictionalized documentary, while a second crew

Gimme Shelter

24.1 In an echo of Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, *Gimme Shelter* incorporates its process of production into its action: Mick Jagger scans footage from the Altamont concert.



Portrait of Jason

24.2 Assailed by his friends for "acting," Jason breaks down (*Portrait of Jason*).

shoots the first crew filming. A third crew is assigned to film either crew, as well as anything else that catches their interest (**24.3**). Greaves's constant interruption of the rehearsals leads to quarrels about what he should emphasize. *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* suggests that in documentaries the very choice of camera position colors our sense of the reality being captured.

McBride, Clarke, and Greaves were exceptional in criticizing Direct Cinema, and standardized uses of the approach continued. The form proved well adapted to capturing the filmmaker's personal experiences. Kazuo Hara's *My Intimate Eros: Love Song 1974* (Japan, 1974) records the filmmaker's obsessive search for the woman who has left him. In *Best Boy* (1979), Ira Wohl traces how his cousin, a middle-aged man with a learning disability, leaves his family to enter a hospital.

Other directors found in Direct Cinema an ability to capture the immediate texture of social and political processes. From the late 1960s into the 2010s, Frederick Wiseman's output of Direct Cinema documentaries provided pure examples of the approach (see Frederick Wiseman and the Tradition of Direct Cinema box).

24.3 *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One*: Using split screen, Greaves can show the same action from three standpoints, yielding different effects.

The observational tradition of Direct Cinema was sustained by France's Raymond Depardon. Beginning at age eighteen as a photojournalist, he quickly combined still

FREDERICK WISEMAN AND THE TRADITION OF DIRECT CINEMA

In the spring of 1966, a middle-aged lawyer produced and directed a film about conditions at a Massachusetts hospital for the mentally ill. He filmed everyday activities as well as a show put on by the patients. The result, titled *Titicut Follies* after the patients' name for their show, was released in 1967 and set off a storm of protest. Since that directorial debut, controversy pursued Frederick Wiseman through more than forty feature-length documentaries. In the process, his work has become emblematic of Direct Cinema.

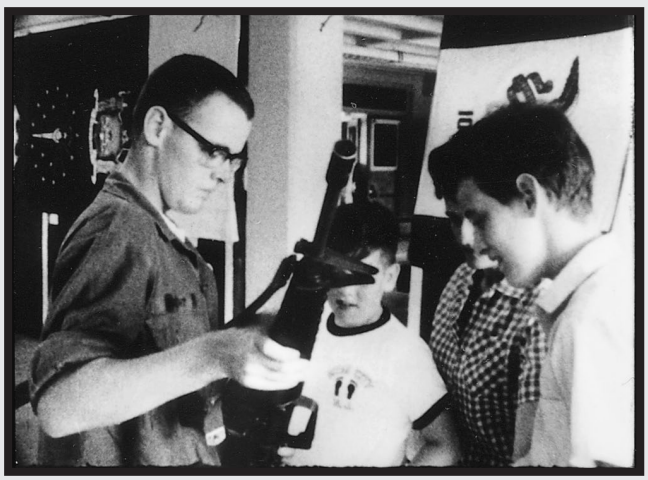
The Drew unit concentrated upon situations of high drama, and the Rouch-Morin approach to cinéma vérité emphasized interpersonal relations (see Chapter 21). Wiseman pursued another path, focusing on the mundane affairs of social institutions. His titles are indicative: *Hospital* (1970), *Juvenile Court* (1972), *Welfare* (1975), *Racetrack* (1985), *Zoo* (1993), *Public Housing* (1997), *State Legislature* (2006), and *National Gallery* (2014). *Law and Order* (1969) records police routine, while *The Store* (1983) moves behind the scenes of a Dallas department store.

Wiseman typically does not follow individuals facing a crisis or solving a problem. He assembles a film out of slices of day-to-day life in a business or government agency. Each sequence is usually a short encounter that plays out a struggle or expresses the participants' emotional state. Then Wiseman moves to another situation and other participants. He has called this a "mosaic" structure, the result of assembling tiny pieces into a picture of an institution. Using no narrator, Wiseman creates implications by making shrewd juxtapositions between sequences. The meaning, he insists, is in the whole.

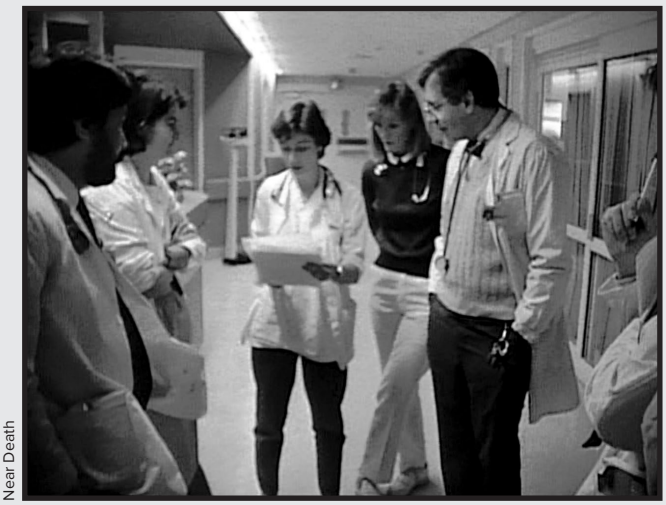
His first films reflect a conception of institutions as machines for social control. He declared himself interested in "the way power is exercised and decisions rationalized."[1] Wiseman records the frustrations of ordinary people facing a bureaucracy, and he captures the insular complacency of those in authority. In his most famous film, *High School* (1968), secondary education becomes a confrontation between bewildered students and oppressive or obtuse teachers: schooling as control and conformity.

In his later work, Wiseman claimed to take a more flexible and open-minded approach reminiscent of Richard Leacock's "uncontrolled cinema" (see The United States: Drew and Associates).

> You start off with a little bromide or stereotype about how prison guards are supposed to behave or what cops are really like. You find that they don't match up to that image, that they're a lot more complicated. And the point of each film is to make that discovery.[2]


Basic Training

24.4 A trainee's family admires his rifle during a visit to boot camp (*Basic Training*, 1971). As in a fiction film, the participants seem oblivious to the presence of the filmmakers.


Near Death

24.5 *Near Death*: As a staff member reads the report ("Operation is futile. 100 per cent mortality"), Wiseman cuts from a full shot . . .

Later films trace the struggles of disabled people in therapy and rehabilitation. *Near Death* (1989) exposes the day-to-day decisions of medical staff in an intensive care unit, and their exercise of professional compassion shows that institutions need not be uncaring.

This concern for complexity, plus decades of support from the Public Broadcasting System, led Wiseman to expand his mosaics to vast proportions. *Canal Zone* (1977) runs almost three hours, and *Belfast, Maine* (1999), a portrait of a community, lasts about six. It is as if his search for comprehensiveness and nuance forced Wiseman to amass more and more evidence, searching for all sides of the story.

Wiseman carries on the Leacock tradition of fly-on-the-wall observation. The camera operator and the recordist (Wiseman himself) efface themselves (**24.4**). The filmmakers ask no questions and hope that the subjects never look into the lens. Wiseman creates classical continuity through eyeline matches, cutaways, and sound overlaps (**24.5**, **24.6**). We seem to be on the scene, invisible observers of mundane social encounters.

Surprisingly, Wiseman insisted that his documentaries were subjective creations, "reality fictions" expressing his personal judgments. Yet many critics and filmmakers believed that by effacing his presence and voice, the films fostered a belief that documentary yielded hard nuggets of fact. Wiseman's consummate use of Direct Cinema became a target for filmmakers who saw documentary as creating an illusory knowledge of reality.

Near Death

24.6 . . . to a close-up of a doctor listening. This and other close views of the staff's reactions were not taken at that moment in the woman's reading, but the sound is unbroken. The conventional editing and the ongoing sound track create the impression of continuous time.

Délits flagrants

24.7 After a four-minute shot of questioning, a female prisoner is handcuffed and led out of the office (*Délits flagrants*).

The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On

24.8 *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On*: the vengeful veteran assaults another ex-soldier when he refuses to acknowledge his role in wartime atrocities.

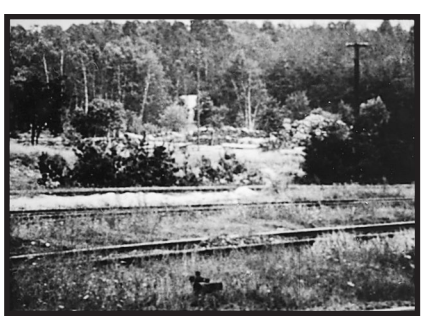
photography with filmmaking. His first feature, *Reporters* (1981), surveys the routines of press photographers like himself. Like Wiseman, Depardon explored social roles and institutions; his handheld camera follows neighborhood policemen in *Faits divers* ("News Items," 1983) and studies psychiatric patients in *Urgences* ("Emergencies," 1987) and *12 Days* (2017). Also like Wiseman, Depardon avoids talking heads and scene-setting montages, preferring to plunge the viewer directly into a situation. But Depardon occasionally includes his own voice-over commentary, and *Délits flagrants* ("Misdemeanors," 1994) experiments with more overt artifice: the camera is fixed to a tripod, framing police interrogations of suspects in dry profile compositions (**24.7**).

While Wiseman and Depardon adhered to the American tradition of Direct Cinema, effacing the presence of the filmmaker, other directors adopted the Rouch-Morin model of provocation (see France: Cinéma Vérité and Provocation p. 429). *Field Diary* (1982), by the Israeli director Amos Gitai, begins with a very long take as the filmmakers move through a town in the Gaza Strip and try to interview its Palestinian mayor. They continually confront Israeli soldiers, who cover the lens and demand identity papers from the sound recordist (**Color Plate 24.1**). Kazuo Hara's *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (1987) follows a Japanese veteran who insists that the emperor take the blame for war crimes. Tracking down witnesses, the veteran invades their homes (**24.8**).

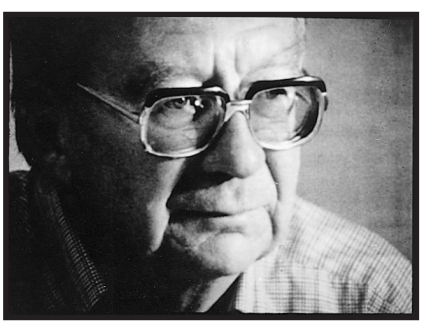
Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), a nearly nine-hour study of the Nazis' extermination of the Polish Jews, recalls Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* (see France: The Auteurs' Documentaries p. 424) in studying bland contemporary landscapes that were the sites of unspeakable cruelty (**24.9**). Here, however, no stock footage takes us into the past; Lanzmann presents only what he called "traces of traces," interviews with witnesses, Jewish survivors, and former Nazis (**24.10**). In the provocateur tradition of Edgar Morin and Chris Marker, Lanzmann is present throughout, guiding, goading, and challenging his subjects.

Synthesizing Documentary Techniques

Shoah, Wiseman's films, and most of the others mentioned earlier are quite pure instances of Direct Cinema. Each is built principally out of the filmmaker-recordist's immediate confrontation with a concrete situation.



Shoah



Shoah

24.9, *left* The extermination camp at Belzic, seen today (*Shoah*).

24.10, *right* Dr. Franz Grassler, former Nazi officer: "We at the Commission tried to maintain the ghetto for its labor force" (*Shoah*).

Usually no narrator or nondiegetic music guides the audience's attention. The most common documentary format was less stringent. It blended Direct Cinema interviews (often including an offscreen questioner), scenes shot on the fly (often without direct sound), and compilation footage, the whole glued together by music and commentary (often voice-over from participants in the situation). Emile De Antonio's *In the Year of the Pig* (1969; see De Antonio and Radical Scavenging p. 497) pioneered this synthetic format, which prevailed well into the 2010s.

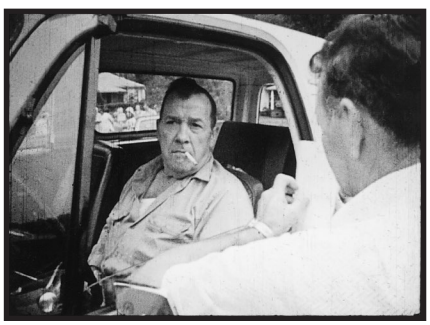
A famous example is Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County USA* (1976). Chronicling a thirteen-month strike of Kentucky coal miners, much of the film is in the Direct Cinema vein. The camera crew records the strikers' changing tactics, with particular attention given to the wives, who block the entry of scab workers. The film has as much drama as any crisis-structure film from the Drew unit—quarrels among the strikers, thugs firing at picketers, and a confrontation between the women and the strikebreakers (**24.11**).

Kopple frames the immediate drama, however, with background history concerning struggles in the mining industry. She draws upon archival footage and interviews with older citizens. And Kopple, a former member of Newsreel (see Engaged Cinema: Collective Productions and Militant Films p. 495), suggests broader points in the manner of De Antonio. There is no voice-over commentator, but superimposed titles supply basic information; regional folk music comments sympathetically on the action; and editing patterns make points in a manner that Leacock would find judgmental (**24.12**, **24.13**). The result has the immediacy of Direct Cinema but supplies historical context and leaves no doubt about the filmmaker's sympathies.

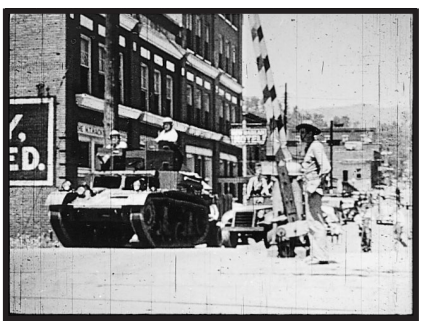
The synthesis of Direct Cinema material, archival footage, titles, and music proved especially apt for examining controversial figures of the recent past, as in *Lenny Without Tears* (1972), *The Times of Harvey Milk* (1984), *Let's Get Lost* (1988), and similar portrait documentaries. Other filmmakers began to use the synthetic format to record lengthy processes. The makers of *So That You Can Live* (UK, 1981) revisited a Welsh family over five years, and the film chronicles not only the maturing of the family members but also the growing sensitivity of the filmmakers. The most staggering long-term project was Michael Apted's *Up* series (UK, 1964–2019), which interviewed the same group of people at ages 7, 14, 21, and onward into their sixties. Over the decades, the installments stress the ways in which social class shaped the subjects' lives. Filmmakers in other countries imitated Apted's longitudinal surveys.

The synthetic approach became the default for most documentaries tracing a historical process because the filmmakers could juxtapose archival footage with present-day testimony. In *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1970), Marcel Ophüls (son of Max Ophüls) examined the Nazi Occupation of France and brought to light a history that many French preferred to hide behind heroic Resistance legends. Newsreels portray citizens acquiescing comfortably to their German masters and turning a blind eye to the holocaust.

Likewise, by putting "talking heads" into context, filmmakers constructed oral histories of social movements in *Union Maids* (1976) and *With Babies and Banners* (1978). *The Wobblies* (1979) traces the history of a left-wing party, while *Before Stonewall* (1984) does the same for gay culture and activism in the United States. Other filmmakers used the synthetic approach to report on contemporary political struggles: nuclear power accidents (*We Are the Guinea Pigs*, 1980), civil wars in Latin America (*When the Mountains Tremble*, 1983), and apartheid (*We Are the Elephant*, South Africa, 1987).



24.11 *Harlan County USA*: in a moment worthy of the Drew unit, the cameraman and sound recordist follow a sheriff reluctantly serving a warrant on a strikebreaker.



24.12 Archival footage used to create Soviet-style montage: a newsreel shot of soldiers moving in to break a strike in the 1930s . . . (*Harlan County USA*)

24.13 . . . gives way to a shot of present-day police arriving to clear the roads, matched in frame position and direction of movement.

Not a Love Story

24.14 Advertising imagery tapping pornographic appeals (*Not a Love Story*).

The synthetic format proved useful as well for filmmakers who followed Newsreel and De Antonio in using interview testimony to challenge media images. In *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (1980)—a study of women who worked in the defense industry during World War II—company films about plant safety are undercut by women's accounts of accidents on the job. *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* (1989, Robert Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman) juxtaposes media coverage of AIDS with the personal stories of five people afflicted with the disease. The interviews in Bonnie Sherr Klein's *Not a Love Story* (Canada, 1981), a study of pornography, move along a spectrum of opinions, ending with an attack upon erotic advertising (**24.14**). In Ava DuVernay's *13th* (2016) interviews and statistics are mobilized to counter widespread opinions on African American imprisonment in the United States.

By the end of the 1960s, the pure forms of Direct Cinema represented by Rouch, the Maysles, and Wiseman were overtaken by the synthetic format. The typical documentary mixed on-the-spot recording of events with staged scenes, interviews, and archival footage, all focused on creating a strong impression of trustworthiness. This, the film seemed to say, is what really happened. At the same time, however, an opposing trend was gathering force. This called into question the idea that cinema could directly record any reality.

Questioning Documentary Actuality

Political modernism, as practiced by Jean-Luc Godard, Nagisa Oshima, Jean-Marie Straub, Danièle Huillet, and others (Chapter 23), set many documentary filmmakers to thinking about their own aims. Throughout film history, and particularly since the advent of Direct Cinema, documentarists claimed to offer immediate access to reality. If the Brechtians' critique of "transparent" and "illusionist" filmmaking (see Brecht and Political Modernism p. 498) was right, though, documentary could appear even more manipulative than the Hollywood fiction film. Perhaps documentary only *seemed* to capture reality.

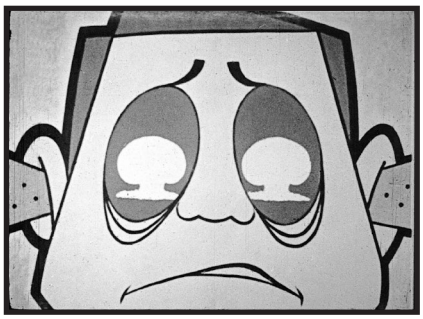
The problem was not just the filmmaker's bias. Many documentarists had acknowledged their own preconceptions, and directors such as Georges Franju and Chris Marker had made it integral to their essayistic films (see France: The Auteurs' Documentaries pp. 424–425). What came to the fore now was the idea that perhaps the very forms and techniques of documentary were invisible conventions, no more inherently valid than the conventions of fictional narratives.

Most documentaries presented themselves as descriptions or stories; yet these forms carried a persuasive effect, asking the audience to accept a tacit social or political perspective. Most documentaries used voice-over commentary, but why grant that voice such authority? Documentaries showed archival footage or on-the-spot interviews, but what gave these images any power to penetrate reality, to present not only isolated facts but also deeper truths?

The Meta-Documentary This line of thought was most explicitly posed by film theorists and critics, but it was not merely academic. Documentaries became more reflexive, turning a critical eye on documentary tradition itself.

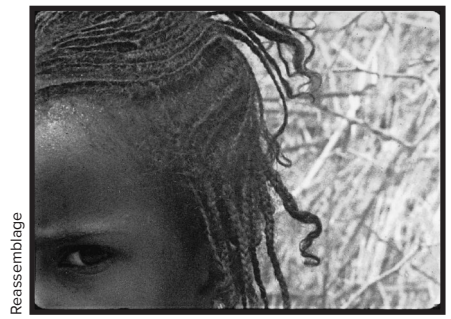
A rudimentary instance is *The Atomic Cafe* (1982, Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, and Pierce Rafferty). This compilation film reviews the history of the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons by the United States, from Hiroshima to the mid-1960s. In the De Antonio vein, commentary is reduced simply to subtitles identifying place, time, and occasionally sources of the footage. But much of the footage does not function as a transparent record of events. Because the shots come from educational and propaganda films, *Atomic Cafe* dwells on the ways in which the staged scenes spread naive ideas of nuclear war (**24.15**). The film implies that the public's acceptance of Cold War policies was strengthened by the conventions of popular media.

The reflexive film might go further and scrutinize its own use of documentary conventions. Raul Ruiz's *Of Great Events and Ordinary People* (France, 1978) takes its title from John Grierson's remark: "We wait for the cinema to give us an event, a great event which can show us ordinary people." Yet, in this film, events and people are



24.15 A Cold War film uses animation to cure a pessimistic citizen of "nuclear blindness" (*The Atomic Cafe*).

24.16 In Ruiz's *Of Great Events and Ordinary People*, an unidentified looker reminds us of the convention of over-the-shoulder camera angles.



24.17 Decentered framings and jerky editing accentuate the "invisible" conventions of the ethnographic film (*Reassemblage*).

visible only through the distorting lenses of the media. "What I am calling the everyday," remarks Ruiz the narrator, "is a parody of TV documentary." Ruiz mocks news broadcasts, Marker's *Le Joli mai*, and the talking-heads convention. Titles announce what we will see, promising "stock footage" and "shots which block the view" (**24.16**). The film's ostensible subject—political attitudes in a Paris neighborhood before an election—is all but lost in tangents and rambling anecdotes. *Of Great Events and Ordinary People* delights in a digressive reflexivity that shows how much of reality the traditional documentary must ignore.

Chris Marker, an old hand at reflexivity and the essayistic form, contributed to the new *meta-documentary* with *Sans Soleil* (*Sun Less*, 1982). A whimsical examination of the byways of Japanese city life is set against glimpses of other nations, while a woman's voice reads extracts from a man's letter about visiting a foreign country. Like Marker's *Letter from Siberia*, *Sans Soleil* questions current documentary clichés ("global culture," "the rise of Asia") while also interrogating assumptions of ethnographic cinema.

Other filmmakers cast doubt on ethnographic efforts to analyze distant cultures. Trinh T. Minh-Ha's *Reassemblage* (1982) presents village life in Senegal in ways that refuse to transmit standard forms of anthropological knowledge (**24.17**). Laleen Jayamanne's *A Song of Ceylon* (1985) presents tableaux of Western leisure activities and courting rituals, accompanied by an anthropological description of a Sri Lankan exorcism (**24.18**). Invoking Basil Wright's *Song of Ceylon* (1935), made for John Grierson's GPO Film Unit (see Great Britain p. 273), Jayamanne questions how Western documentary traditions represent nonwestern societies.

24.18 *A Song of Ceylon*: as in Maya Deren's *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (see 21.40), Jayamanne presents stylized images of social rituals. Unlike Deren, however, she criticizes ethnographic discourse by means of a dramatized sound track.

Another strategy of meta-documentary involved making a film about the impossibility of making the film originally intended. One of the earliest instances was Marcel Hanoun's *Octobre à Madrid* ("October in Madrid," France, 1964); later ones were Michael Rubbo's *Waiting for Fidel* (Canada, 1974) and Jill Godmilow's *Far from Poland* (the United States, 1984).

Such meta-documentaries of the 1970s and 1980s used reflexivity to explore the idea that any documentary carries a large freight of artifice—in its conventions, its appeal to ideology, and its reliance on the tricks of fictional filmmaking. Some documentarists began to doubt whether film could ever truthfully represent the world.

Demystifying the Documentary More commonly, as in *The Atomic Cafe*, a meta-documentary does not question the power of all documentary filmmaking; it seeks only to demystify certain forms or production processes. This moderate position has precedents in films that used reflexivity to convey points that ordinary documentaries miss. In *Man with a Movie Camera*, for instance, Dziga Vertov shows people filming, editing, and watching the film we see; but this is in order to assert a new claim about reality, that all labor is harmoniously integrated into Soviet life (see Narrative p. 112). Mario Ruspoli's *Regard sur la folie* (see France: Cinéma Vérité and Provocation p. 430) and Shirley Clarke's *Portrait of Jason* make us aware of the act of filming, but principally to assure us of the actuality of the events portrayed.

One of the most celebrated examples of this moderately "meta" position is Errol Morris's *The Thin Blue Line* (1988). While revealing documentary artifice, Morris also tries to uncover the truth about a murder case. As in the synthetic format of the 1970s, there is no Voice of God commentary, and interviews with participants mingle with stock footage. Morris's reflexivity poses the problem of documentary reenactment by including highly artificial restagings of the investigation, the police interrogation of the suspect, and the murder itself (**Color Plate 24.2**). At first, the reenactments may seem merely dramatic license, but they change to accommodate new or contradictory testimony. The film thus suggests that the original event can be known only through distant, and biased, retellings.

Yet out of the lies, cover-ups, and conjectures a plausible case emerges—plausible enough that the film helped free a falsely convicted man. *The Thin Blue Line* grants that personal bias, cultural predispositions, and cinematic conventions often mislead us; but it also declares that the documentarist can find a persuasive approximation to truth. This is a more tentative position than that adopted by Dziga Vertov, Robert Flaherty, or proponents of Direct Cinema, but it does secure a place for documentary as a legitimate means of probing reality.

Documenting Upheavals and Injustice

Western documentarists and theorists had the luxury to muse on the truth of documentary in the 1970s and 1980s. Then political and social upheavals shook the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Asia, and other regions. Filmmakers, especially in the Third World, took advantage of newfound access to equipment, even in amateur formats, to record those events. Suddenly the urgent truth value of the footage they captured seemed beyond debate. In 1986, when rioting toppled the regime of Ferdinand Marcos and ushered in a democratic government in the Philippines, Nick Deocampo filmed shorts such as *Revolutions Happen Like Refrains in a Song* (1987) in the streets on super-8 mm film.

Filmmakers in the disintegrating Soviet bloc seized upon documentary as a way of exposing decades of oppression and lies. Films about the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, about the grip of Stalinism on everyday life, and about scandals in the military and the bureaucracy poured forth. Marina Goldovskaya's *Solovki Regime* (1988) shows how a monastery was used as a Stalinist prison camp. Juris Pokniek's *Is It Easy to Be Young?* (1987) mixes rough Direct Cinema techniques with provocative, Rouch-like interviews in tracing teenagers from their attendance at a 1985 rock concert to their participation in the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

Similarly, the Chinese government's massacre of pro-democracy student protesters in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989 led to important documentaries. In 1991, Shi Jian and Chen Jue released an eight-part video series called *Tiananmen Square*, attempting to capture the life of the country at the time of the protest movement. In 1995, an American-made documentary, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon), stirred controversy by questioning the motives and decisions of the Chinese student leaders as well as those of the government officials. Into the 2000s, Chinese filmmakers continued to capture the wrenching changes of rapid industrialization.

Filmmakers all over the world sought to uncover injustices past and present. *A Wall of Silence* (1994) documented the search for mass graves of Jewish forced laborers during World War II. Filmmakers revealed the oppression of women in some Asian countries, as in Young-joo Byun's trilogy (*Murmuring*, 1995; *Habitual Sadness*, 1997; and *My Own Breathing*, 1999) based on the recollections of Korean women forced into sexual slavery during World War II. Rithy Panh's own childhood memories formed the basis of his *The Missing Picture* (2013), in which painted figurines enact Cambodian massacres (**24.19**).

The right-wing government of Augusto Pinochet in Chile and its aftermath inspired numerous documentaries. Patricio Guzmán had documented the move toward the coup d'état that toppled the liberal government of Salvador Allende in *The Battle of Chile* (1973–1978). Returning from exile to Chile in the late 1990s, Guzmán discovered that the younger generation had little idea of their own past. So he documented the loss of a sense of history in *Chile, The Obstinate Memory* (1997). Guzmán's *Nostalgia*

The Missing Picture

24.19 Rows of captured women are invoked through carved figures (*The Missing Picture*).

for the Light (2010) revisits the Pinochet years more obliquely, suggesting poetic links between astronomers studying the stars and old women scouring the desert for the remains of political prisoners.

Documentaries sponsored by a government or industry tended to present arguments and settled conclusions, but the activist tradition was predicated on asking questions. In many of the films just mentioned, investigation provided the central plotline. Filmmakers sought to go behind official stories and standard assumptions. In *Witness* (2016), the brother of a New York murder victim seeks to find out whether, as newspapers reported, bystanders ignored her screams. After popular politician Boris Nemtsov was shot dead in Red Square, Russian filmmakers offered *My Friend Boris Nemtsov* (2017) and *The Man Who Was Too Free* (2017) as indictments of their country's tyranny.

Investigative documentaries were not always harsh exposés. The crowd-pleasing *Searching for Sugarman* (2012) reveals the whereabouts of a lost singer. Still, some films changed history. After *Blackfish* (2013) revealed the mistreatment of captive whales, an amusement park abandoned its breeding program. *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (1996) investigated the trial of teenagers accused of brutally murdering three children. Two sequels revisited the case and provided other explanations for the crime. The series helped exonerate the men falsely imprisoned.

The development of consumer video allowed people throughout the world to reveal social struggles. Filmmakers showed poor people living on garbage in Brazil (*The Scavengers*, 1992) and child labor in the Philippines (*Children Only Once*, 1996). *Sisters in Law* (2005) and *Iron Ladies of Liberia* (2007) chronicled how African women gained power in politics and law. *Yellowing* (2016) recorded the 2014 Umbrella Movement, in which thousands of Hong Kong students occupied the streets to demand electoral democracy. Because of government disapproval, the filmmakers could not get theaters to show the film and had to resort to guerrilla screenings.

Amateur digital video made possible one of the most epic efforts in the history of documentary. Somewhat in the vein of Frederick Wiseman, Chinese filmmaker Wang Bing embraced Direct Cinema methods to scrutinize ordinary people's responses to institutional pressures. His nine-hour *West of the Tracks* (2003) begins by critically surveying one district's decaying factories and goes on to follow the families who struggle to survive after the plants close (**24.20**, **24.21**). Wang went on to make many more films, including a nearly four-hour study of men housed in a mental institution (*'Til Madness Do Us Part*, 2013).

In such documentaries, the classic commitment to recording life as lived, and as riddled with problems, was reaffirmed. Similarly, *The Act of Killing* (2012) blended a corrosive exposure of political oppression with a questioning of how people understand their actions. From 1965 to 1966, the Indonesian government dispatched death squads to eliminate more than a million farmers, union members,

West of the Tracks

West of the Tracks

24.20, *left* *West of the Tracks*: workers press on through crumbling factories.

24.21, *right* A son, distraught at being unable to save his father from arrest, collapses drunkenly (*West of the Tracks*).

The Act of Killing

24.22 Torture and murder reenacted in film noir style in *The Act of Killing*.

and ethnic minorities. The current government maintains a paramilitary force, and the older killers are esteemed patriots. This history was not widely known to the outside world, so filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer could have built his film as an investigation of these monstrous crimes, past and present.

Instead, in the tradition of Rouch/Morin provocation, Oppenheimer asked the murderers to explain their deeds. They do so by restaging their crimes in scenes recalling the gangster films and musicals they admired in their youth (**24.22**). Filmed in artificial sets and lighting, the enthusiastic reenactments of torture and massacre become deeply disturbing to us, to the actors who participate, and to some of the killers themselves. *The Act of Killing* becomes a record of both the men's crimes and their fantasies of power and identity: what Oppenheimer calls "a documentary of the imagination."[3]

Theatrical Documentary in the Age of Video and the Internet

As Chapter 8 indicated, the feature-length documentary film achieved artistic stature and won theatrical releases during the 1920s. The form largely went into eclipse in the sound era, and from the 1950s onward, television sponsored the kinds of documentaries that traditionally would have played in theaters. As a result, any documentary shown in a commercial theater had to offer something special, built on content that was unlikely to be broadcast.

Theatrical documentaries might feature raunchy stand-up comedy, high-end rock concerts, or an occasional political controversy, as in *Hearts and Minds* (1974), a controversial examination of the Vietnam War. Another strategy was to offer visual and audio quality that could not be matched on the home screen. This was the thinking behind IMAX. Premiered at Expo '70 in Osaka, IMAX offered ten times the image area of an ordinary 35 mm frame. By 2001, there was a worldwide circuit of 183 IMAX auditoriums. The venues, often museums, played documentaries about science and nature, as well as occasional concert films. Eventually, multiplex theatres added IMAX screens to offer big-format versions of Hollywood blockbusters (see Multiplexing and Megaplexing: The New Face of Exhibition p. 654).

During the 1990s, documentaries became a more significant slice of US theatrical releases. This was largely due to the rise of American independent cinema (see Chapter 27), which created a cluster of small companies and arthouse theaters. Documentaries were cheaper to produce than fiction films, so independent distributors could earn money with nonfiction films that offered something edgier than traditional television fare. Soon Home Box Office (HBO) and other networks were commissioning documentaries that could win acclaim in the theatrical market before coming to cable.

Successful theatrical releases tended to fall into a few genres. Sex or violence furnished common subject matter. *American Pimp* (1999) interviews African American pimps and the prostitutes they manage, while *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003) shows a family collapsing under charges of pedophilia. The theatrical market also proved increasingly hospitable to documentaries with a social or political message. The breakthrough was *Roger & Me* (1989), which established Michael Moore as the most famous documentarist on the American scene. (See Facts, Truth, and Attitude: Michael Moore and Errol Morris box.) His *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) took in nearly $60 million internationally, while *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004) earned twice that.

Moore showed that a documentary could compete with Hollywood blockbusters, even if it presented a controversial political position. As a result, distributors took chances with polarizing films such as *Control Room* (2004), about the Qatar television station Al-Jazeera, and *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), Al Gore's warning about climate change. The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 brought forth an enormous number of documentaries. Independent documentarists could uncover aspects of US policy that commercial television, constrained by government policy, could not. *Gunner Palace* (2005) recorded the troops' daily lives, while *The War Tapes* (2006) featured footage shot by soldiers themselves. Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, political documentaries from many positions found places in multiplexes and art houses.

FACTS, TRUTH, AND ATTITUDE: MICHAEL MOORE AND ERROL MORRIS

Michael Moore and Errol Morris came to prominence at nearly the same time: Morris's *Thin Blue Line* was released in 1988; Moore's *Roger & Me* was released in 1989. Both men reaped the benefits of growing support for independent cinema, and their idiosyncratic films fitted the new demands for personal visions. Both were interested in ideas, but they also saw that to reach large audiences a documentary needed a dramatic narrative driven by clearly defined characters. Instead of filming gray-bearded experts pontificating in front of bookshelves, they sought out extreme situations and eccentric or sinister individuals. The differences in their approach to this format defined two poles of US documentary from the 1990s onward.

Moore became famous for his attacks on American corporations and political policies, but he would not have attracted so much attention if he had not made himself his protagonist. In sneakers, baseball cap, and thick glasses, Moore looked like a stereotypical Midwesterner. Each of his films becomes his personal quest for truth, showing irreverent humor and a dogged refusal to take no for an answer. *Roger & Me* chronicles his efforts to ask Roger Smith, the CEO of General Motors, why the Flint, Michigan, plant was shut down. A notorious school massacre in Colorado led Moore to investigate Americans' attitude toward guns in *Bowling for Columbine* (2002). *Sicko* (2007) pursues a comparison between health-care practices in the United States and in other countries. *Where to Invade Next* (2015) takes the filmmaker to countries that had dealt with unemployment, immigration, and other social problems more effectively than the United States had. Moore claimed that his films were not neutral reportage, but something like newspaper editorials—strong opinions backed up with evidence.

Moore's biggest success was *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004). Although Moore takes center stage in some sections, President George W. Bush becomes the film's main figure. Moore portrays him as lazy, slow-witted, and devoted to serving corporations and rich Saudis. According to Moore, the President exploited the nation's grief after the 2001 World Trade Center (WTC) attacks in order to launch a tragic war. Moore widens his attack in the final sections of the film. Borrowing confrontational tactics from Direct Cinema, he ambushes Senators on the street to ask if their children will enlist in the armed forces (**24.23**). Moore's earlier films had been accused of distorting evidence, so for *Fahrenheit 9/11* he detailed all his sources in a book and on his website.

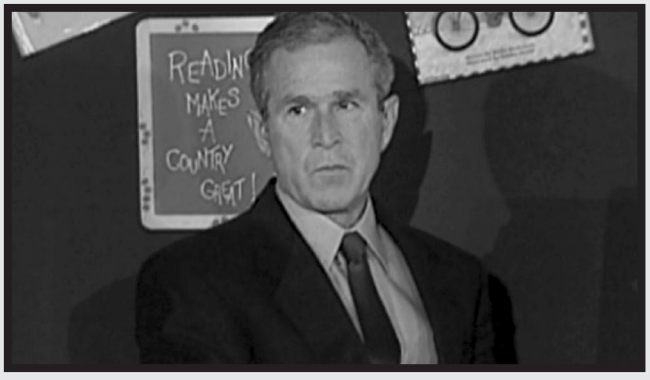
The films score their points with bluntness and gonzo humor. *Fahrenheit 9/11* makes scathing use of behind-the-scenes footage. Perhaps the most famous sequence is the one showing President George W. Bush in a schoolroom learning that the United States has been attacked. On the sound track, Moore offers possible thoughts: "Was he wondering if maybe he should have shown up to work more often?" (**24.24**).

Moore's aggressive, opinionated films and best-selling books made him one of the most prominent figures on the US political left. He was incessantly attacked in print, in the blogosphere, and in other films. Yet he remained close to his Midwest origins. During the 2016 presidential election, he predicted, against prevailing opinion, that Donald Trump would win. *Michael Moore in TrumpLand* (2016) recorded Moore's one-man show asking Ohio Trump supporters to consider supporting Hillary Clinton.

Errol Morris did not arouse so much controversy. He did not put himself at the center of his movies, and he tackled his subjects from a more cerebral angle. Before *The Thin Blue Line*, Morris had made documentaries about a pet cemetery

Fahrenheit 9/11

24.23 *Fahrenheit 9/11*: Michael Moore gives a Marine enlistment brochure to a Senator and urges him to sign his children up for the Iraq mission.



Fahrenheit 9/11

24.24 As the World Trade Center burns, President Bush shifts uneasily in his chair and reads *My Pet Goat* to schoolchildren (*Farenheit 9/11*).

(continued)

FACTS, TRUTH, AND ATTITUDE: MICHAEL MOORE AND ERROL MORRIS, continued

Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control

24.25 A topiary gardener labors over a giraffe in *Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control.*

Standard Operating Procedure

24.26 Recalling how she was abruptly relieved of command at Abu Ghraib, a Brigadier General asks: "You're afraid to look Janice Karpinski in the eye?" (*Standard Operating Procedure*).

(*Gates of Heaven*, 1981) and an eerie town (*Vernon, Florida*, 1981). These established his willingness to lace apparently neutral documentaries with mordant humor. While *The Thin Blue Line* also has its light moments, it concentrates on the difficulty of recovering a past event. Instead of giving up the search for truth, however, Morris shows that with effort, a film can present a plausible account of events (see Demystifying the Documentary p. 520; **Video 24.1**).

Morris moved toward a string of portrait documentaries. Some explored the nature of genius and talent: a study of physicist Steven Hawking (*A Brief History of Time*, 1991) and a subtle examination of three gifted eccentrics (*Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control*, 1997). These films give sway to Morris's love of the grotesque (**24.25**). *Tabloid* (2010) dissected how the British press sensationalized a court case in which a woman was accused of raping a Mormon missionary.

In less playful films, Morris showed how intelligent, apparently rational people could pursue lethal courses of action. *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.* (1999) studies a man bent on improving execution equipment and convincing the world that, on engineering grounds, the Holocaust could not have occurred. In *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara* (2003), Morris portrays the architect of America's involvement in the Vietnam War. The brilliant McNamara, who formulates ten "lessons" about global conflict, reveals himself as oddly shortsighted, inclined, like Fred Leuchter, to treat individuals as data sets and design constraints. The conclusions about these men emerge slowly, not pounded home by voice-over commentary in the manner of Moore.

Moore put himself center stage, but Morris remained offscreen. He devised what he called the "interrotron," an arrangement of cameras and mirrors that allowed his interviewees to look directly at him while seeming to look at the camera. The result gives talking heads a disconcerting intimacy (**24.26**).

Morris's analytical approach dominates *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008), which scrutinizes the activities of US soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Morris interviews the guards involved in "breaking" prisoners and photographing them in humiliating poses. But *Standard Operating Procedure* goes into meta-documentary territory to ask how we can arrive at truth on the basis of images. In a book and a *New York Times* blog series, Morris asked how a photograph, a moment lifted from the fabric of life, can ever represent the truth of the situation. "When you see a picture," one soldier comments, "you never see outside the frame."

Morris argued: "There's always an imposition of point of view in anything. There's this crazy thinking that style guarantees truth. You go out with a hand-held camera, use available light, and somehow the truth emerges. . . . I call attention to the fact that I have a point of view."[4] Michael Moore would have agreed. Both filmmakers sought to go beyond Direct Cinema recording by acknowledging their own concerns and commitments. Yet they also sought to expose a reality that went beyond mere opinion. Moore used a machete, while Morris used a scalpel. But both sought to show that the detached observation of Direct Cinema was not the only way that a documentary could offer something approximating truth.

Distributors discovered that for a mass audience, a strong central figure like Michael Moore yielded entertainment value. As a result, many of the most important theatrical documentaries of the 1990s and 2000s offered portraits of vivid personalities. *Hoop Dreams* (1993) by Peter Gilbert, Frederick Marx, and Steve James follows the contrasting fortunes of two Black Chicago teenagers hoping for basketball careers. Terry Zwigoff blended interviews and candid footage in *Crumb* (1994), which centers on the underground comic artist Robert Crumb and his dysfunctional family. For *American Movie* (1999), Chris Smith spent two years following the struggles of an obsessive Wisconsin filmmaker to produce a horror film.

Werner Herzog's long career as a documentarist, paralleling his work in fiction films (see Herzog, Wenders, and Sensibilist Cinema p. 560), was built around his own image. He came to personify the mystical filmmaker exploring unearthly beauty and superhuman endurance, traveling from the burning oil fields of Kuwait (*Lessons of Darkness*, 1992) to the freezing Antarctic (*Encounters at the End of the World*, 2007) and the world's oldest surviving paintings (*Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, 2010). Herzog turned his lens on extreme personalities as well, such as the world's greatest "ski-flier" in *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* (1974; **Color Plate 24.3**), the bear-lover of *Grizzly Man* (2005), and the Vietnam-era POW of *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997). Other filmmakers turned the Herzog/Moore role of the inquiring filmmaker to more mundane concerns, as in Morgan Spurlock's attempt to survive on a diet of Big Macs (*Super Size Me*, 2004).

So strongly did documentaries perform in theaters that uncontroversial topics that would once have been confined to television found their way to multiplexes. There were feature films about the love of literature (*Stone Reader*, 2003), crossword puzzles (*Wordplay*, 2006), and video game competitions (*King of Kong*, 2007). Nature documentaries such as *Winged Migration* (2001), *March of the Penguins* (2005), and *Monkey Kingdom* (2015) benefited from big-screen presentation while offering family-oriented viewing.

Nonfiction film was becoming more visible outside the mainstream theatrical market as well. Dozens of festivals were devoted wholly to documentary, and other festivals added it as an award category. Such screenings sometimes primed films for theatrical release, but they also introduced viewer to films that might otherwise be overlooked.

For example, cinematographer Kirsten Johnson had been haunted by images of suffering she had captured in Bosnia, Darfur, and other crisis-ridden areas. She created *Cameraperson* (2016) as a compilation of footage, mostly discarded, from films she had worked on. With her editors, she shaped the film as both a memoir and a tribute to the endurance of the people she filmed (**24.27**). After its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival, *Cameraperson* won eight worldwide festival awards and was voted best documentary of the year by several critics' associations.

The new technology of DVD, then Blu-ray, further expanded the audiences for documentary. Like garage bands cutting their own CDs, filmmakers could use the disc format to bypass media gatekeepers. Nature and sports documentaries filled bins at video stores. Political filmmakers could find wide audiences through online disc sales. Robert Greenwald's critiques of corporate culture (*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, 2005) had counterparts in conservative attacks on Democratic politicians.

Cameraperson

24.27 Kirsten Johnson filmed a boy partially blinded by rocket fire in Kabul. That project was never completed, but she included the footage in her personal documentary *Cameraperson*.

This access to viewers broadened in the 2010s when independent documentaries became available on streaming services. Soon, major filmmakers were producing directly for the Internet. Barbara Kopple's *This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous* (2017), about a transgendered fashion celebrity, was made for YouTube, while Netflix supported Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar's *American Factory* (2019).

Probably the most important documentarist to gain fame via the Web was Adam Curtis. His sprawling, intellectually complex documentaries were mostly made for British television. He could not get licensing rights for the hundreds of bits of footage he employed, so the films could not be shown in theaters or distributed on DVD. Instead, they were posted online soon after their TV premieres—at first by fans and then by the BBC.

Curtis's films were skeptical, sometimes frightening meditations on how modern societies use power. He traced the history of advertising (*The Century of the Self*, 2002), the rise of Islamic terrorism and US neoconservatism (*The Power of Nightmares*, 2004), the influence of game theory on geopolitics (*The Trap*, 2007), and the centrality of Saudi Arabia to international conflicts (*Bitter Lake*, 2015). Deploying montage techniques reminiscent of Dziga Vertov, *Kuhle Wampe*, and *La Vie est à nous* (see A New Generation: The Montage Filmmakers p. 109, Germany p. 267, and Popular Front Filmmaking: *La Vie est á nous* and *La Marseillaise* p. 257), filling the sound track with his urgent voice-over commentary, Curtis offered the audiovisual equivalent of a densely researched book of history, laced with macabre asides and ironic humor. Like Moore, Morris, Herzog, and many others, he turned away from the neutrality of Direct Cinema toward purely personal statement.

STRUCTURAL FILM AND AFTER

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, experimental filmmaking sustained its postwar renaissance. Established experimental genres and styles continued. Stan Brakhage continued with his wide-ranging efforts in film lyric, and other filmmakers pursued that path as well. Film portraits and diaries were still made—some, like Jonas Mekas's autobiographical series, of mammoth length. The cut-out animation of Larry Jordan recalled the Surrealist collages of Max Ernst (**Color Plate 24.4**), and the Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers used Dadaist strategies to question the institution of the museum and art history in *Figures of Wax* (1974).

Perhaps the most innovative Surrealist work was done in Czechoslovakia by the animator Jan Švankmajer. Trained in the marionette section of the Academy of Fine Arts but influenced by Czech Surrealism of the 1930s, Švankmajer turned away from the mainstream animation developed by Jirí Trnka in the 1950s (see Experimental Narrative p. 440). His first short film, *The Last Trick* (1964), combined puppets and frame-by-frame animation in a bizarre duel of two magicians.

In Švankmajer's films, images of fear, cruelty, and frustration exude black humor. Every object has a rich texture and tactile appeal, yet the events follow the illogic of dreams. Slabs of meat slither about; antique dolls are ground up and boiled into soup; faces in old prints stare enigmatically as enraged puppets smash each other with mallets. In Švankmajer's first feature, *Alice* (1988), loosely based on Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, the heroine dips her finger into a jar only to find marmalade laced with carpet tacks. *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1981) plays out a repulsive metaphor for communication: heads made of vegetables and tools devour each other and then vomit each other out (**Color Plate 24.5**).

The underground tendency also flourished after the late 1960s. Soon, however, the more commercially marketable elements of underground cinema obliterated its more experimental aspects. Andy Warhol lent his name as producer to self-consciously camp features directed by Paul Morrissey (*Trash*, 1970; *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein*, 1973). Amplifying the Kuchar brothers' parodies of Hollywood melodrama, John Waters produced *Pink Flamingos* (1972), *Female Trouble* (1975), and other low-budget films reveling in bad taste and shock effects.

In a comparable vein were the early super-8 mm films of the Spaniard Pedro Almodóvar, who moved aboveground with a 16 mm feature, *Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls in the Neighborhood* (1980). In the 1970s, the underground film became a marketable genre. It became the *midnight movie* or the cult film playing campus film societies, and it provided Morrissey, Waters, Almodóvar, and other directors an entry to commercial features.

Structural Film

While the underground film went mainstream in the late 1960s, a more intellectual approach to experimentation was taking shape. The American critic P. Adams Sitney called this tendency Structural Film. Although Sitney later regretted using this term, it gained wide currency in experimental circles around the world.

If underground filmmakers emphasized shocking subject matter, Structural filmmakers stressed challenging

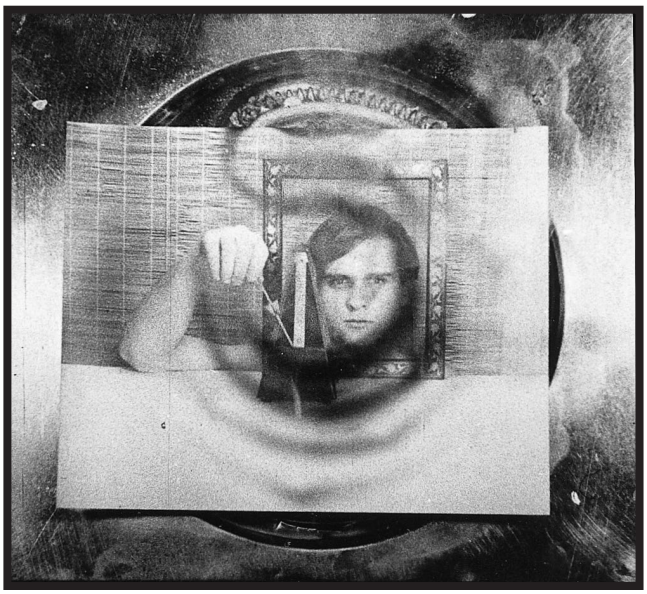
form. They concentrated the spectator's attention on a nonnarrative shape or system that organized the film. Usually this form unfolded gradually, engaging the spectator in a process of noticing fine detail and speculating on the film's overall pattern.

A prime instance is Hollis Frampton's *(nostalgia)* (1971). It consists of twelve shots; in each one, a photograph resting on a hot plate slowly burns to ashes (**24.28**). The sound track also consists of twelve units, and, in each, the narrator discusses his memories of each photo. But each chunk of narration describes not the photo onscreen but the photo that is to come next. The spectator imagines what the next photo will look like, but she or he can never directly check the description with the picture. The idea of nostalgia—a longing for a past that cannot be recaptured—is manifested in the very structure of the film.

Frampton's film is also about the process by which images are born and die, and this reflexivity is characteristic of Structural cinema. A Structural film might be "about" camera movement or photographic texture or the illusion of motion. In *Serene Velocity* (1970), Ernie Gehr creates pulsating views down a corridor by alternating shots in which only the focal length of the lens changes (**24.29**). Structural films were often called anti-illusionist because they drew attention to the ways in which the medium transforms the object filmed. As in *(nostalgia)*, the viewer becomes sharply aware of the act of viewing.

Structural principles had been explored in earlier avant-garde works. *Eat* (1963) and other early Warhol films emphasized stasis and minimal change, while his use of entire camera rolls as the units of the film suggested a modular construction that was explored by Structural filmmakers. During the 1960s, Minimalist sculptors, painters, and composers also concentrated attention on bare-bones forms and slight changes in materials. Yvonne Rainer's dance piece "Trio A" (1966) focused attention on small movements and ordinary, worklike gestures.

Particularly important sources for Structural Film were experiments by the loose group of American painters, composers, and performance artists known as Fluxus. Influenced by Marcel Duchamp's Dada work (see Dada Filmmaking p. 154) and John Cage's theories of indeterminacy (see Underground and Expanded Cinema p. 444), Fluxus artists sought to dissolve the bounds between art and life. They "framed" mundane events or actions—a dripping tap, a paintbox—as artworks. "Fluxfilms" pioneered the Structural approach, often by recording such banal activities as eating and walking. Mieko Shiomi's



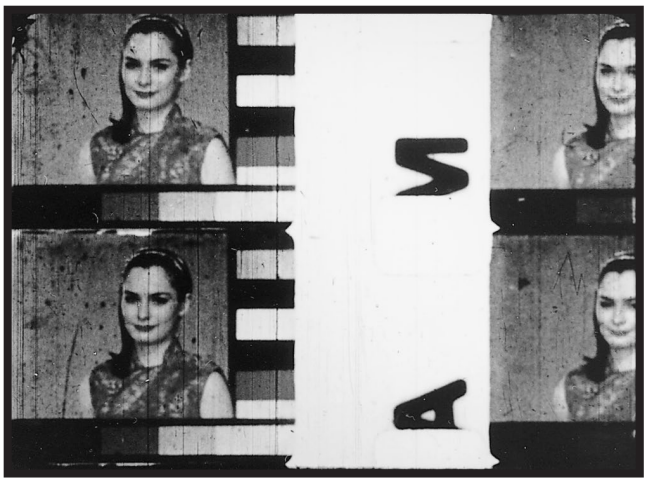
nostalgia

24.28 A photograph starts to burn on a heating coil in *(nostalgia)*.

Serene Velocity

24.29 Alternating shots of a corridor, taken with a zoom lens set at different focal lengths, create a rhythmic push–pull effect in *Serene Velocity*.

24.30 Yoko Ono's 1966 *Film No. 4 (Bottoms)* consists exclusively of walking buttocks.



24.31 *Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc.*: loops of a laboratory test in which the woman on the right blinks but the woman on the left does not.

Disappearing Music for Face (1966) records a fading smile at 2,000 frames per second, creating onscreen movement so slow as to be imperceptible. Conceptual artist Yoko Ono made several Fluxfilms (**24.30**) and with her husband, John Lennon, continued on a minimalist line. Their forty-five-minute *Fly* (1970) follows a fly crawling over a woman's body.

Having largely abandoned storytelling, Structural filmmakers sought other organizing principles. Some films center on a single process of gradual change, inviting the spectator to notice minute differences from moment to moment. For example, Larry Gottheim's *Fog Line* (1970) shows, from a fixed long shot and over an interval of eleven minutes, a field with fences and cattle gradually becoming visible as a fog lifts. This gradual-change approach usually relies on the static camera setup, the long take, or some form of rephotography. In David Rimmer's *Surfacing on the Thames* (Canada, 1970), an optical printer reduces riverboats to slightly changing granular patches reminiscent of Impressionist painting (**Color Plate 24.6**).

Other Structural films complicate their form through repetition. George Landow's *Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc.* (1966) takes a strip of test footage featuring a woman's face, copies it so that four shots fill the frame, and then loops the result so that the strip accumulates scratches and dirt in successive printings (**24.31**). Paul Sharits's films alternate solid-colored frames and tableaux of aggressive actions. The result bombards the viewer with flickering colors and subliminal imagery (**Color Plate 24.7**). Ken Jacobs's *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* (1969) employs rephotography to dissolve a 1905 American Mutoscope & Biograph film into frozen gestures and patches of light and dark.

Several Structural filmmakers organized their work around a rigorous, almost mathematical, set of rules. Kurt Kren's and Peter Kubelka's early 1960s work (see Abstract Film p. 437) anticipated this tendency. In *Serene Velocity*, Gehr adjusted focal length according to a strict set of procedures, moving from the least distinct changes to the most radically noticeable ones. J. J. Murphy's *Print Generation* (1974) is guided by a similar plan. After reprinting casual footage until it became blobs and smears of light, Murphy arranged the shots into arithmetical patterns that develop from dimly visible imagery to recognizable figures and then back into abstraction.

The most famous Structural film, *Wavelength* (1967), by the Canadian Michael Snow, offers a rich mixture of techniques. It begins as a descriptive study of a single loft apartment, with the camera fixed at a distance from the windows. People enter and leave, and a death seems to occur, but the camera refuses to budge, preferring to register the slight changes in illumination in the apartment. At the same time, the film flaunts a technique: the zoom, which abruptly and spasmodically enlarges the frame at intervals, indifferent to the action in the room. Over forty-five minutes, as the lens enlarges the back wall (**24.32**), it reveals a photograph of waves on the ocean. (So the film traces a literal "wavelength.") In addition, bursts of color periodically wash out the shot, serving as reflexive reminders of the flatness of the cinematic image.

Several of Snow's films emphasize how the moving frame shapes our response. *Wavelength* exhibits the

Wavelength

24.32 The camera zooms in on a distant wall, oblivious to the dead man in the foreground (*Wavelength*).

Zorns Lemma

24.34 *Zorns Lemma*: an "A" word.

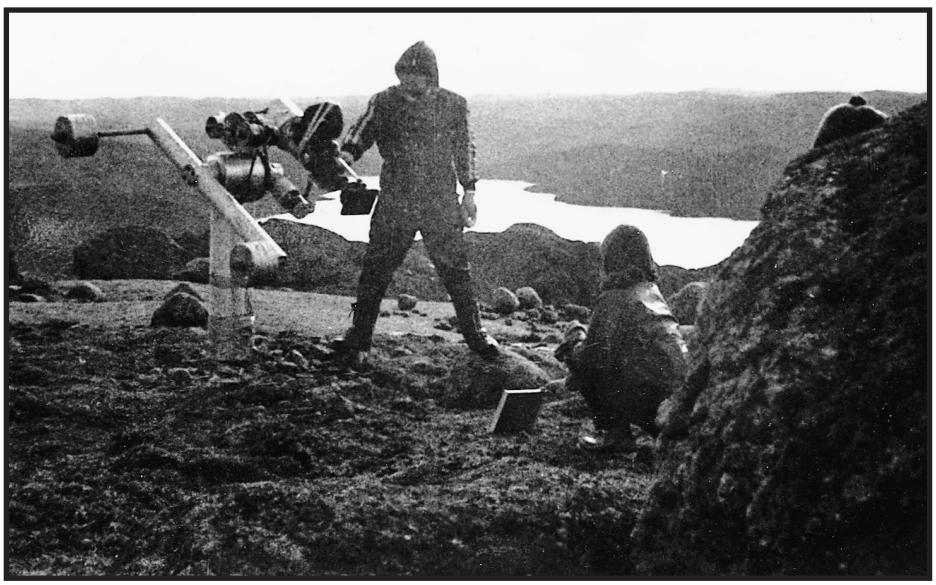
perceptual effects of the zoom; ↔ (called *Back and Forth*, 1969) explores pan shots; *Breakfast* (1976) comically demonstrates how the tracking shot alters space. For the majestic *La Région centrale* (*Central Region*, 1971), Snow filmed a rocky wasteland with a multiple-jointed machine that executed pans, crane shots, and other movements (**24.33**).

In the United States, perhaps the most versatile exponent of Structural Film was Hollis Frampton. Trained in science and mathematics but steeped in the history of painting and literature, Frampton declared his opposition to the romantic sensuousness of his predecessors. According to Frampton, to understand an artwork a viewer had to recover its "axiomatic substructure"[5]—a notion that would have made Stan Brakhage shudder.

Frampton's celebrated *Zorns Lemma* (1970) merges several strains within Structural cinema. The film's first section, over a blank screen, consists of a woman's voice reading an ABC rhyme taken from a colonial American primer. The second portion consists of one-second shots showing single words, usually found on signs (**24.34**), arranged in alphabetical order. Gradually, as Frampton runs through the alphabet again and again, every time using a different set of words, each letter's slot is filled by an image—fire, ocean waves, grinding hamburger. By the end of this section, the film has created a unique pictorial alphabet, each image correlated with one letter (**Video 24.2**).

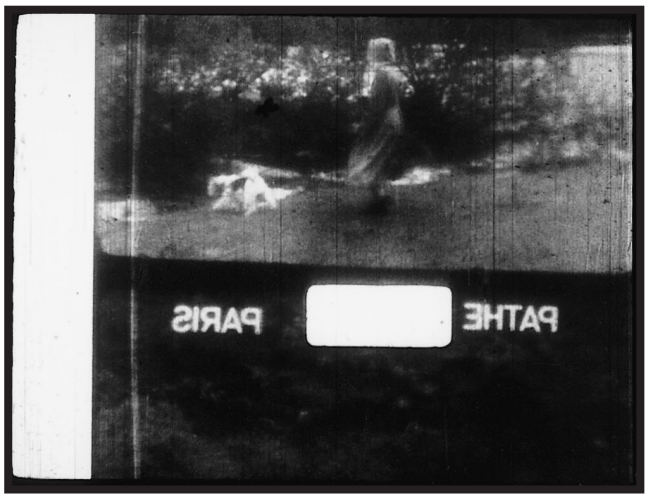
The film's final section consists of several long takes of a man, a woman, and a dog slowly crossing a snowy field as voices read a medieval text about light. While the middle section exemplifies the rigorously systematic side of Structural Film, Frampton's fixed camera and final long takes present a gradual change in the manner of Gottheim's *Fog Line* and other meditative works.

Frampton's films, like other Structural pieces, often invite the spectator to watch himself or herself undergoing the very experience of the film. This "participatory" relation between the viewer and the film led Sitney to suggest that the Structural trend was fundamentally about human consciousness, the ways in which the mind builds patterns out of sensory information.



La Région Centrale

24.33 Snow adjusts his filming machine in the Canadian landscape; during shooting, the camera's gyrations were operated by remote control (*Central Region*).

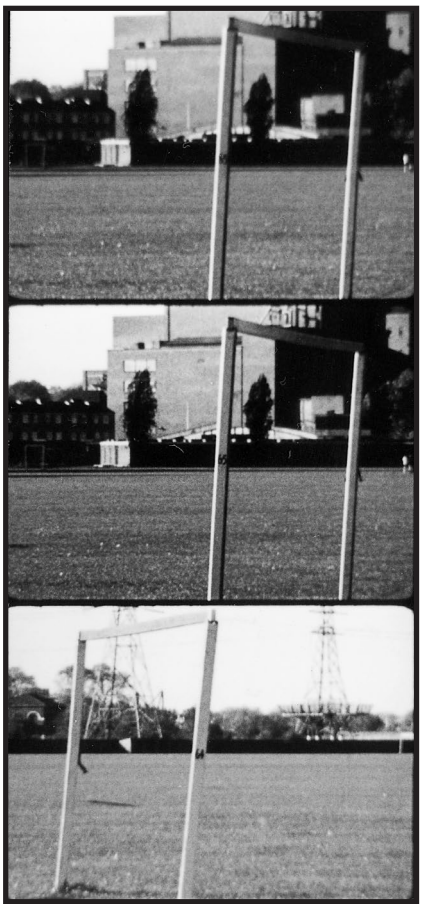


Little Dog for Roger

24.35 A 9.5 mm home movie, with its central perforations and skewed frame lines, whizzes through the frame in Le Grice's *Little Dog for Roger*.

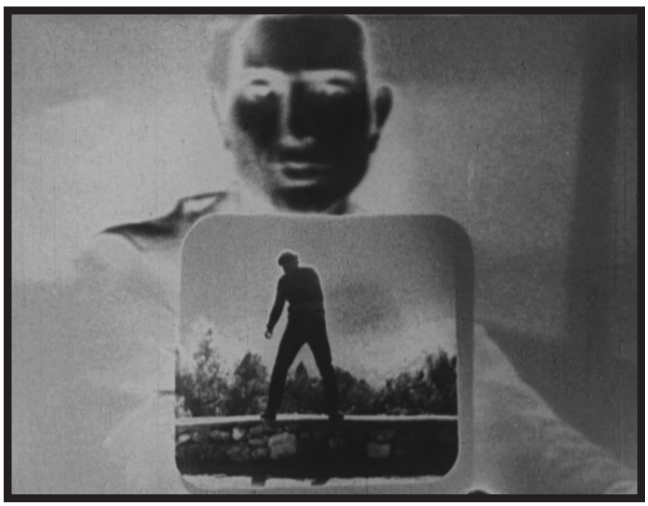
British filmmakers drawn to the Structural idea found this psychological approach disagreeable. At the London Co-op, "Structural/Materialist" filmmakers such as Peter Gidal and Malcolm Le Grice insisted that the most honest film was about only the medium itself. By drawing the spectator's attention to filmic qualities, the films produced knowledge about the "material" processes of cinema. Le Grice's *Little Dog for Roger* (1967), which subjects old home movies to a dizzying range of printing techniques (**24.35**), exemplifies this stance. Structural/Materialist ideas influenced many British filmmakers, including Chris Welsby (*Seven Days*, 1974) and John Smith (**24.36**), who turned landscapes into formal systems far stricter and more elaborate than those visible in *Fog Line* and *Central Region*.

But sometimes the Structural impulse had a less intellectual tint. Some filmmakers used the Structural Film's emphasis on purely cinematic material to evoke emotions recalling the film lyric. The Italian painter Paolo Gioli imaginatively manipulated the machines and materials of cinematography. Like Landow, Jacobs, and the British Structural/Materialists, he reworked footage scavenged from early cinema. Shots are accelerated, halted, torn up, flipped over, and turned to negative (**24.37**). Several shots may be embedded within the frame, which itself may glide out of alignment with the edges of the screen. In his search for destabilized imagery, Gioli created cameras without shutters and replaced lenses with pinholes. But Gioli does not subject the burst of imagery to a strict rational plan, going instead for strongly charged emotions. His rapidly cut films suggest anxiety and pain, while the gentler



Hackney Marshes–November 4th 1977

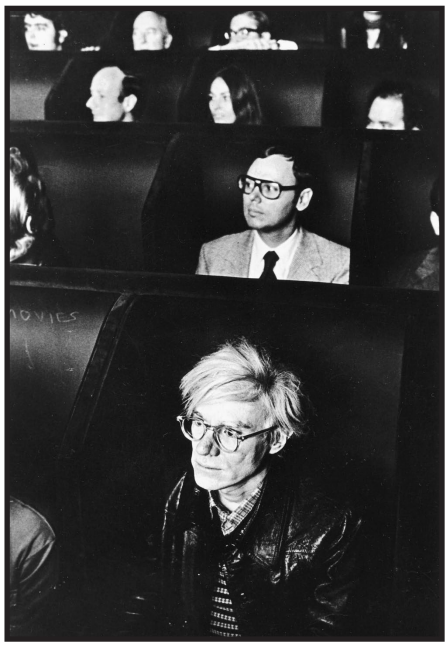
24.36 Editing turns goalposts into purely material configurations in John Smith's *Hackney Marshes–November 4th 1977* (1977).



Images Disturbed by a Puissant Parasite (1970)

24.37 In *Images Disturbed by a Puissant Parasite* (1970), Gioli's fascination with the punctured frame of 9.5 mm film stock becomes a compositional device.

Anonimatograph (1972) recasts home movies and domestic photos in order to evoke a family's separation during World War I.



Pencil Booklings

24.38 Between 1970 and 1974, New York's Anthology Film Archives held screenings in the "Invisible Cinema," an auditorium designed to enhance each individual's absorption in the film experience. Here, Andy Warhol sits in one of the auditorium's partitioned seats.

Underground film reached a broad public through accessible humor and shock value, but most Structural films were aimed at a sophisticated audience interested in reflexivity and other rarefied aesthetic issues. The films' intellectual rigor and affinities with art-world movements carried them into museums, galleries, art schools, and film departments.

Structural Film further benefited from an expansion of avant-garde institutions. In 1966, the Millennium Film Workshop of New York began as a production cooperative and screening venue. Jonas Mekas opened the Anthology Film Archives (**24.38**) in 1970 as a repository for a canon of masterpieces, including many from the postwar avant-garde. In response, the Collective for Living Cinema (founded in 1973) offered younger artists a venue. During the same period, filmmakers began to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (established in 1965), state arts councils, and the Jerome Foundation (established by railroad heir and experimental filmmaker Jerome Hill).

Cooperatives and collectives grew stronger. In Britain, Cinema Action and The Other Cinema were formed to distribute experimental work. Bruce Elder in Canada, Peter Gidal in England, Birgit Hein in Germany, and other Structural filmmakers wrote essays that attracted public attention and helped fund work in this vein. The British Film Institute expanded its aid to experimental production, as did the Canadian Arts Council. The Goethe Institute of West Germany and the Alliance Française offered touring packages of experimental films. In all these countries, Structural Film played a central role in making experimental film culturally respectable.

Reactions to Structural Film: The Return of Narrative

As institutional support expanded for the Structural project, North American filmmakers launched ambitious, even epic works. Michael Snow's *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen* (1974) runs four and a half hours. Its segments systematically explore paradoxes of language and sound effects in the cinema. Hollis Frampton conceived *Magellan*, a thirty-six-hour film to be shown in installments over 371 days. It remained unfinished at Frampton's death in 1984.

For many filmmakers, however, these efforts showed that Structural Film was an overintellectual, apolitical dead end. Its acceptance as "high art" meant that the avant-garde had lost its critical edge. Generations who had not lived through the innovations of the 1960s had little sympathy with modernism, particularly in its purist guises. Moreover, Structural Film, especially in North America, had been dominated by men, but the reactions to the Structural movement were led by women. This tendency paralleled the growth of feminist documentary and feature filmmaking during the 1970s. Women filmmakers often turned to personal, confessional modes that created complex memoirs of growing up female.

For all filmmakers, despite the 1960s–1970s flurry of co-ops and institutional funding, by the 1990s opportunities were narrowing. Experimentalists, particularly in Europe, where government subsidies supported more offbeat work, were seeking to reach mainstream or arthouse audiences. In Britain, support for small-scale filmmaking was drastically cut in the late 1980s, while in the United States the National Endowment for the Arts began to refuse to support work judged blasphemous or obscene. Museums' budget deficits forced them to orient exhibits toward broader tastes. In becoming an elite art, avant-garde film had become largely confined to universities and prey to dwindling government funding. Eventually, some experimental cinema would turn to video and migrate to museums and the Internet.

Going beyond Structural Film There was a growing sense that, in all media, avant-garde activity had reached a steady state. Some critics proposed that the idea of one stylistic movement following another was no longer valid. After Structural Film, arguably the last large-scale movement in experimental cinema, artists would pursue a variety of forms and styles, none of which would dominate.

From this angle, it did not seem a step backward for Nathaniel Dorsky to make quasi-abstract explorations in line and texture such as *Triste* (1994; **Color Plate 24.8**). Phil Solomon, a friend of Brakhage, gave found footage a voluptuous handling, in bursts of color (*The Secret Garden*, 1988) or burnished monochrome seething with the spidery cracks of a rediscovered painting (*American Falls*, 2000–2012; **Color Plate 24.9**). Similarly, over more than fifty years Robert Beavers, collaborator and partner of Gregory Markopoulos, remained committed to merging lyrical film with diary forms, ending still-life framings with quick camera jerks suggesting eye-flicks. Peter Hutton could instill the landscape film with a lustrous beauty characteristic of old photographs without seeming to follow either Structural or anti-Structural trends (**24.39**).

Still, Structural Film remained as central to the avant-garde as Direct Cinema was to the documentary. Many of Structural practitioners continued their explorations for decades. Ernie Gehr turned an outdoor glass elevator into a vehicle for vertigo in *Side/Walk/Shuttle* (1991; **24.40**), and he adapted Structural methods to digital video in the 2000s. Michael Snow's *Corpus Callosum* (2002) was a large-scale mixture of visual effects and whimsy like *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot*. Just as important, Structural techniques were still very powerful tools. Lengthy and static shots, a focus on gradual changes, scrutiny of found footage, the search for minimal conditions of cinema, and conceptual principles of form like numbers or categories—all these continued to stimulate experimental filmmakers. Avoiding this aesthetic was surprisingly difficult. Take, for instance, the case of *paracinema*.

In 1973, viewers in New York City came to see a work by Anthony McCall called *Line Describing a Cone*. They might have expected an abstract film, but what they got was far from that. On screen, all that could be seen was a dot of light gradually completing a circle. But turning toward the projector, viewers saw something different. Over thirty minutes, a slender line of light twisted and billowed to create a hollow cone that filled the viewing space. The result was a light-based sculpture (**Color Plate 24.10**). Dust motes and cigarette smoke made the emerging shape seem even more palpable.

Line Describing a Cone created its changing beam through a piece of film running through a projector. After other "projector-beam" films, McCall dispensed with film and projector altogether. *Long Film for Ambient Light* (1975) consisted of a Manhattan loft lit by a single bulb and filtering diffused light from outdoors. Over fifty days, spectators were invited to come and go as they liked. How could this be a film at all?

McCall's work was the extreme edge of what one historian has called paracinema—films that reject some basic materials of the film medium but still play on our expectations about what cinema is.[6] *Line Describing a Cone* minimizes the role of imagery projected on a screen in order to show that we can think of film as luminous, changing

Time and Tide

24.39 In *Time and Tide* (2000), Peter Hutton renders a ship's path through ice as a slow, symmetrical unfolding.

Side/Walk/Shuttle

24.40 Sliding slowly through a cityscape, *Side/Walk/Shuttle* uses Structural rigor to create dizzying perceptual puzzles.

sculpture. McCall could have called his *Long Film*, "A Visit to My Loft," but then he would not have asked the viewer to think about changing patterns of light as cinematic material. The Structural filmmakers explored the physical material of the film strip and the ways that photography transformed the world. Paracinema asked people to acknowledge cinematic qualities outside the medium as we traditionally define it.

With *Line Describing a Cone*, the film-object emerged during projection, and other filmmakers emphasized projection as a kind of performance. Ken Jacobs, a well-established Structural filmmaker, created a spectacle he called Nervous System. Jacobs discovered that he could change the viewer's experience by projecting two copies of a film at the same time, but with the projectors slightly out of sync, superimposing one image on another or running one print a little faster. The result could be hallucinatory. For his performance cycle *The Impossible* (1975–1980), he recast *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son*, which he had already dissected in Structural fashion (see Structural Film), into a complex array of dissolving views, including phantom 3D effects. Jacobs gave the audience filters to hold before their eyes, so that the figures on screen became at once more solid and more like apparitions.

The work of McCall, Jacobs, and others suggested expanding our conception of cinema, rather than reducing it to physical material, as Structural Film had. But in a sense they continued the Structural impulse. What was the cone or ambient-light film but an example of minute gradual changes, as in *Fog Line*? And McCall said that *Line Describing a Cone* dealt with "one of the irreducible, necessary conditions of film: projected light."[7] Paracinema seemed to define a new set of essentially cinematic qualities—light in time, or the unrepeatable ecstasies of a particular screening, or simply some idea of "the filmic" that could be found in many ordinary phenomena (like a New York loft). Going beyond Structural Film was not as easy as it might seem.

Stories, Dense or Cryptic How do you challenge a powerful artistic trend? One way is to embrace what it refuses. In the case of Structural Film, that was narrative. To one degree or another, filmmakers brought stories back to the avant-garde. But these stories were not those of mainstream cinema. And some filmmakers sought to blend the emotional appeals of storytelling with the conceptual, reflexive form of Structural cinema.

One way to absorb narrative was to rework mainstream movies in dislocating ways. Peter Tscherkassky, an Austrian Structural filmmaker fascinated by the opulence of Hollywood spectacle, dismantled a widescreen horror film. By superimposing frames from different parts of the original, *Outer Space* (1999) accentuates genre conventions—conjuring up a new flurry of specters to plague the heroine—while also creating abstract, hallucinatory imagery (**24.41**).

Off-kilter homages to mainstream filmmaking also figured in the work of Canadian Guy Maddin. A passionate cinephile, Maddin merged melodrama and grotesque fantasy in *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988), *Archangel* (1990), and *Twilight of the Ice Nymphs* (1997). His short film *The Heart of the World* (2000) tells the story of Anna, a Bolshevik scientist who studies the earth's core. Maddin draws on newsreel footage but also creates extravagant sets. *The Heart of the World* parodies silent Soviet and German cinema with canted angles, hectic montage, and *Metropolis*-like machines, while scratching and overexposing the film to resemble archival footage (**24.42**).

24.41 *Outer Space*: By printing superimpositions with a contact printer lit by a laser pointer, Tscherkassky turns the horror movie *The Entity* (1982) into a phantasmagoria.

The Heart of the World

24.42 Geometric set design in *The Heart of the World* recalls European avant-garde styles of the 1920s (compare with 4.35, 5.5, and 5.7).

Tribulation 99

24.43 *Tribulation 99*: in a tabloid-style juxtaposition, aliens from the earth's core greet President Eisenhower.

Rather than dismantle a single film or genre or style, some filmmakers simply ransacked mass culture as a whole to create hallucinatory, digressive narratives. In Leslie Thornton's *Peggy and Fred in Hell* series (1983–2013), two children journey through contemporary America, its desolate rooms and landscapes littered with bits of classic films, the Old Testament, citizens' band radio, and TV commercials.

Editing bits and pieces of mass-media products had been pioneered by the Lettrists and Bruce Conner (see The Experimental Compilation Film p. 441). The technique was given a narrative arc in Craig Baldwin's paranoid compilation *Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies under America* (1992). Baldwin linked conspiracy theories, science fiction, and millenarian fantasies into a supermarket-tabloid history of the world (**24.43**). A parallel development took place in the USSR. The satiric compilation films of Igor and Gleb Aneinikov (*Tractors*, 1987) mock clichés of Socialist Realism in ways reminiscent of that unofficial Soviet version of Pop Art called "Sots Art."

Pop-culture collage could also employ cut-out animation. Lewis Klahr sliced up old magazines and comic books to create phantasmagorias of American middle-class life. Klahr's films suggest digressive, cryptic narratives under their surface. In *Altair* (1994), clippings from 1950s women's magazines suggest a plunge into alcoholism. In *The Pharaoh's Belt* (1993), ninjas wrestle in suburban living rooms, babies gnaw through layer cakes, and models and superheroes meet the Jolly Green Giant (**Color Plate 24.11**).

Narrative came forward in other ways in the work of several women filmmakers. Chantal Akerman's *Je tu il elle* ("I You He She," 1974) followed a young woman's wanderings on the road. Joyce Wieland's *The Far Shore* (1976) inserted mythical characters into a biography of a prominent Canadian painter. Wieland was a multimedia artist who saw film as a natural extension of her work in painting and needlework.

Film about a Woman Who

24.44 The title questioning image in *Film about a Woman Who . . . .*

Similarly, Yvonne Rainer moved to film because of her wish to present emotion in a more direct way than she could in dance. Her *Lives of Performers* (1972), *Film about a Woman Who ...* (1974), and *Kristina Talking Pictures* (1976) dominated what came to be called the "New Talkies," because of their extensive use of dialogue and voice-over commentary.

Rainer's films take up subjects familiar from Hollywood melodrama—love affairs, relations among women, and definition of the self through memory. But the plots remain fragmentary, and character relations are vague or even inconsistent. The same character may be played by different actors; a voice cannot always be assigned to a figure. Dramatic events occur offscreen, presented on the sound track or in captions. Onscreen we see photographs and still lifes, performances and recitations. Occasionally, a text queries both the viewer and the image (**24.44**).

Journeys from Berlin/1971 (1980) exemplifies Rainer's approach. Several lines of material alternate. A rolling title chronicles West Germany's treatment of political criminals. There are long-held cityscapes, overhead views of

Journeys from Berlin/1971

24.45 The mantelpiece as landscape and still life in *Journeys from Berlin/1971*.

The Falls

24.46 The home of Constance Fallaburr, adjacent to Zürich airport (*The Falls*).

Stonehenge and the Berlin Wall, and glimpses of a man and a woman on city streets. In a string of psychoanalytic sessions, the doctor changes from a woman to a man to a child. At intervals, the camera tracks across a mantelpiece crowded with objects that are referred to elsewhere in the film, including a heap of spaghetti (**24.45**).

The new narratives of the 1970s retained some of the rigor and playfulness of Structural cinema. Rainer's delayed hookups between image and sound (asking the spectator, for instance, to remember the spaghetti when the patient mentions it) recall the participatory processes of Frampton's *(nostalgia)*. Structural impulses also returned in James Benning's films, in which sketchy narratives are played out in vast, gradually changing Midwestern landscapes. His *One Way Boogie Woogie* (1977) carries color motifs and barely noticeable actions through sixty long shots lasting one minute each (**Color Plate 24.12**).

Stories emerge more playfully in the work of the Englishman Peter Greenaway. He gleefully discovered obscure narratives lurking within nearly every structural pattern—numbers, colors, and alphabets. His films, though based on categorical structures, are far from minimal; they are jammed with whimsical anecdotes and arcane references. While Frampton's *Zorns Lemma* employs the alphabet as a nonnarrative structure, in Greenaway's *The Falls* (1980) alphabetical order forms the basis of a three-hour survey of how a mysterious public health disaster affected ninety-two people whose surnames begin with "Fall" (**24.46**). As the spectator struggles to assemble a larger story out of the Falls' dossiers, Greenaway parodies the clichés of experimental film through negative footage, tinted shots, looping, and rephotographed shots of rippling water.

Punk and No Wave The most abrasive alternative to Structural Film emerged from a new insistence on raw emotion in art. In the 1970s, Punk rock became a force in pop music, while Neo-Expressionism and graffiti art emerged in the world of painting. Jagged, visceral narrative films shot on super-8 mm appeared in Manhattan music clubs, bars, and cabarets. Vivienne Dick's *She Had Her Gun All Ready* (1978) centers on the sadistic relationship between an aggressive woman and her passive partner. In Scott B and Beth B's *The Black Box* (1979), mysterious thugs kidnap and torture a young man. The audience is assaulted as well when the theater lights flash on and off in synchronization with the punishing rays of the "black box."

Rejecting most avant-garde trends of the moment, Punk and "No Wave" filmmakers scavenged ideas from B movies, exploitation films, film noir, and pornography. Kodak's introduction of synchronized-sound super-8 mm stock in 1974 enabled directors to shoot long dialogue scenes and enhance the films with a microphone buzz that would grate on the nerves when magnified on music-club sound systems.

Punk-flavored movements appeared outside the United States. In Japan, college and high school students created Punk-oriented super-8 mm films with noir leanings, often inflected by ideas drawn from violent Japanese *manga* (comic strips). In Masashi Yamamoto's feature-length *Dark Carnival* (1981), a rock singer wanders through the Shinjuku area of Tokyo, discovering the ugly, horrific side of city nightlife. Shunichi Nagasaki's *Heart, Beating in the Dark* (1982) presents a tale of a young man and woman spending a night together copulating, the event interrupted by mysterious flashback and fantasy scenes; in some of these, she envisions him as another woman. An annual festival sponsored by a Tokyo pop-music magazine encouraged young filmmakers to create experimental small-gauge work, and festival winners found producers offering to back projects.

In the USSR, Punk 16 mm filmmakers worked outside the official film culture in the early 1980s. With Gorbachev's new policies of openness, this underground cinema surfaced. Many of its products, closely tied to Soviet rock and roll, were harsh, chaotic, and obscene in the American Punk vein. Evgeny Yufit founded what he called "necro-realism" in films of degeneracy, death, and absurdity shot in a frantic, rough-edged style.

For all its brutal intensity, the Punk and No Wave trend was one more sign of a return to storytelling in the avant-garde. Another indication was a defiant interest in pornography, criticized as a misrepresentation of women's sexuality but also celebrated as a subversive source of pleasure. Elfi Mikesch and Monika Treut's *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* (West Germany, 1983), with its sadomasochistic tableaux; Claudia Schillinger's *Between* (West Germany, 1989), with its fantasies of bondage and masturbation; Peggy Ahwesh and Keith Sanborn's *The Deadman* (the United States, 1989)—all aimed defiant gestures at mainstream viewers and fastidious avant-garde tastes. Warhol, who influenced underground film, Structural Film, and Punk film, could also be considered another inspiration for this aggressively erotic work.

Political Modernism, Feminism, and Subcultural Narratives During the 1970s, commitment to political modernism waned in the commercial art cinema, but it gained ground in the experimental realm and never left.

An early trend sought to criticize ideologies from a standpoint influenced by contemporary film theory. Influenced by Godard and Straub and Huillet (see Young German Film p. 401), filmmakers used a minimal visual style and lengthy spoken commentary to criticize the political power of visual media and other sign systems. An influential early example was Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx* (Great Britain, 1977), which interrupts a story of a contemporary woman's daily life with ancient imagery, footage of a handheld game, and lectures about psychoanalytic theory.

In the same vein, Sally Potter's *Thriller* (Great Britain, 1979) cites classical storytelling in order to dismantle it: Mimi, protagonist of Puccini's opera *La Bohème*, investigates her own death. This paradoxical plotline unrolls as an exploration of how women's identities are historically defined by language and conventional imagery. *Thriller* plumbs the ideological underpinnings of myths and classic artworks (**24.47**). Potter's shift to narrative prepared her to make more mainstream features with more orthodox plots, but they retained their ties to politicized narrative and experimental technique; the dialogue of *Yes* (2004) is in rhyme.

Political filmmaking in the wake of 1968 posited that "the personal is the political." By the mid-1970s, many feminist filmmakers were finding political implications in the avant-garde's realm of "personal" filmmaking. Women filmmakers took up lyric and Structural techniques to reveal domestic space from the standpoint of women's memory and imagination. The way had been pointed by the Canadian Joyce Wieland (*Water Sark*, 1965; *Hand Tinting*, 1967) and the German Dore O. Nekas (**24.48**).

Michelle Citron (*Daughter Rite*, 1978) and Marjorie Keller (*Daughters of Chaos*, 1980) reworked their parents' home-movie footage in order to discover how female roles and attitudes take shape within family life (**24.49**). These films redefined the Brakhagean film lyric. Instead of yielding security and artistic inspiration, the home often creates anxiety, pain, and oppression. The spontaneous self-expression of *Anticipation of the Night* (see The Second Postwar Decade: Stan Brakhage p. 442) is replaced by a suggestion that a sense of self is constructed through social processes.

Thriller

24.47 Mimi/Musetta meets another Mimi as herself in Potter's *Thriller*.

Lawale

24.48 The family portrait as stifling tableau in *Lawale* (West Germany, 1969, Nekas).

Daughters of Chaos

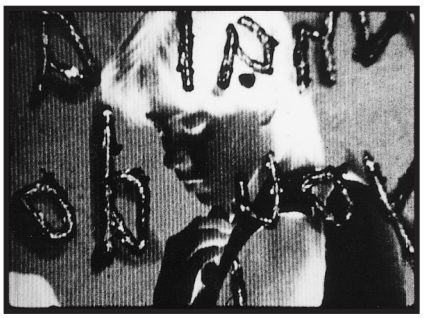
24.49 *Daughters of Chaos*: girls together in a home movie.

Born in Flames

24.50 *Born in Flames*: underground radio, with activist DJs inciting revolt.

Sebastiane

24.51 *Sebastiane* creates a homoerotic version of the saint's martyrdom.


Gently Down the Stream

24.52 The masked and looped imagery of Structural Film, the New Talkies' use of intertitles to narrate the action, and handscratches reminiscent of Brakhage evoke dreams and a sexually charged feminist anger in Friedrich's *Gently Down the Stream* (1981).

By the 1980s, a distinctive feminist avant-garde emerged, embracing narrative to capture women's experience but enhancing it with techniques drawn from the entirety of the experimental tradition. In Lizzie Borden's dystopian *Born in Flames* (1983), aspects of feminist Punk meld with rap music in a portrayal of women guerrillas in a future society uniting to fight the government (**24.50**). Through a similar mixture of styles, Jennifer Todd Reeves's *chronic* (1996) traces the causes of a girl's self-mutilation. Reeves's *The Time We Killed* (2004) intercuts a woman's retreat to her apartment with fantasies and flashbacks, including imagery of the 9/11 Trade Tower attacks and the invasion of Iraq.

The avant-garde had long nurtured gay and lesbian cinema. In the 1970s and 1980s, as gay activists openly challenged heterosexual society (see Chapter 23), filmmakers more frankly made homosexual works. The West German Rosa von Praunheim undertook a string of militant quasi-underground films beginning with *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), which surveys New York gay life.

More widely seen was the work of Derek Jarman, an English painter and set designer. Jarman's short, super-8 mm films are reminiscent of Brakhage in their jittery camerawork and of Warhol in their impassive treatment of male bodies. *Sebastiane* (1976), his first feature, sets its action in the era of the Roman Empire, and the film's dialogue is all spoken in (subtitled) Latin. Its loose plot follows the fortunes of a Christian soldier who is ultimately martyred as much for resisting an officer's sexual advances as for refusing to fight on pacifist grounds (**24.51**). Jarman went on to make both gay-inflected arthouse narratives (*Caravaggio*, 1986; *Edward II*, 1991) and the minimal *Blue* (1993), which presents a radiantly colored screen accompanied by the voice-over of the nearly blind filmmaker.

Jarman was a strong influence on the New Queer Cinema, which emerged in several countries and which found an international venue at the New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival, founded in 1987. Many feminist filmmakers pioneered lesbian and bisexual cinema. Barbara Hammer, Abigail Child, and Su Friedrich drew on Structural, New Narrative, and Punk techniques, as well as soap operas and film-noir imagery, to present stories centering on childhood trauma and sexual desire (**24.52**).

Some filmmakers of color worked in the experimental vein. In London, the Sankofa Film and Video Collective and other groups tackled British Black issues while also absorbing avant-garde elements. Martina Attile's *Dreaming Rivers* (1988), with its deathbed visions of a woman who has emigrated to London from the West Indies, has precedents in Deren's trance films. Isaac Julien's *Looking for Langston* (Great Britain, 1989) opened up the artist-biography film with imagery reminiscent of Cocteau. From the 1990s onward, many minority filmmakers brought their social criticism to documentary and gallery video.

New Mergers

Avant-garde and documentary cinema had mingled since the 1920s, and they continued to do so. Like other trends, merging with documentary often committed the experimentalist to telling stories.

As a young photographer in Amsterdam, Johan van der Keuken found Direct Cinema liberating but felt that it downplayed formal concerns. Across dozens of films,

CUTTING THE TIE TO PHOTOGRAPHY: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY

As experimental impulses merged with documentary filming, so did animation. Historically, documentaries have resorted to animation chiefly for quick illustrations of maps and charts. Animation might seem unable to capture actuality as live-action cinema does. Nonetheless, filmmakers explored ways in which animation can represent people and what they do.

A straightforward option was to let animation illustrate a recorded conversation. In *Moonbird* (1959) and other films, John and Faith Hubley pictured what their children told them. For *Abductees* (1995), Paul Vester recruited animators using very different styles to visualize the testimony of people who report being captured by aliens. In *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy?* (2013), florid doodles decorate Michel Gondry's interview with linguist Noam Chomsky, which is itself represented in cartoon form (**24.53**). More elaborate 3D animation was used in a similar situation in Chris Landreth's *Ryan* (2004). An interview with a pioneering Canadian animator, now homeless, is rendered through eerie computer-generated imagery (*CGI*), with the decrepit but still effusive Ryan hollowed out (**Color Plate 24.13**).

Sometimes animation was used to show what was never filmed, or could not be filmed. *Drawn from Memory* (1991) is a memoir of Paul Fierlinger's childhood during World War II. Jen Sachs's *Velvet Tigress* (2001) deploys pixilation, cutouts, drawn animation, and digital compositing to illustrate a 1931 murder and its cover-up.

Ari Folman made *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) to record his struggle to recall his experience in the Israeli infantry during the war in Lebanon. The film alternates between his life in the present, interviewing others who were in Beirut during a massacre, and scenes recreating past events that he witnessed (**24.54**, **Video 24.3**). The guilt Folman feels drives him to the sort of investigation that became common in live-action documentaries.

Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy?

24.53 An animated interview with Noam Chomsky (*Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy?*).

Waltz with Bashir

24.54 *Waltz with Bashir*: the bleak aftermath of combat.

Tower

24.55 Eyewitness testimony with digital rotoscoping and original footage in *Tower*.

Life, Animated (2016) employs cartoons to suggest a person's imagination. Ron Suskind's son Owen, affected by autism, was helped to connect with other people through Disney cartoons. So Suskind incorporated them into his film, adding new animated sequences to illustrate Owen's perception of the world. By contrast, the public tumult of a 1966 mass murder was distilled into poignant form in Keith Maitland's *Tower* (2016). Maitland used the synthetic format to follow the agonized progression of events as people are trapped on a Texas campus by a sniper above them. There are interviews, archival footage, contemporary images, and even reenactments. But by digitally rotoscoping all this material, Maitland renders the events and the survivors' reactions in stylized images (**24.55**). The result is more moving than the hastily snatched 16 mm images of the event are.

Ever since Flaherty, documentary filmmakers have gone beyond simply recording reality. Those relying on animation are following Vertov, Ruttmann, Humphrey Jennings, and many others in trying, though all the techniques cinema affords, to creatively interpret events in our world.

van der Keuken sought to balance photographic authenticity with innovative style and structure. *Blind Child 1* (1964) was at once a record of how a blind boy makes his way through the world and an assembly of sounds as he might hear them. *Four Walls* (1965) treats a housing shortage as a study in cramped visual design.

In the 1970s, van der Keuken widened his view and created large-scale films about working people around the world. His "North-South Trilogy" (1972–1974) juxtaposed laborers in the Third World with others in Europe, drawing out similarities and contrasts through composition and sound effects. Many of the shots have the abstract beauty of paintings, as when Bolivian miners are shown jammed into an elevator cage (**Color Plate 24.14**). The energetic van der Keuken produced both straight reportage and ruminative film-essays reminiscent of Chris Marker (see France: The Auteurs' Documentaries p. 425). *Amsterdam Global Village* (1997) is a vast city symphony, showing how the city is linked to distant corners of the earth.

The Danish filmmaker Jørgen Leth made a similar effort to fuse the documentary impulse and avant-garde aesthetics. He filmed hippies in Nepal, a trip through China, dance concerts, and sports, particularly bicycling, and he gave many of these projects a poetic treatment. At the other extreme, he scrutinized ordinary behavior in experiments he labeled "anthropological." *The Perfect Human* (1967) puts a formally dressed man and woman in a white vacuum and makes them soberly perform ordinary actions such as dressing, eating, and falling. The voice-over commentator explains what we are seeing in the simplest terms, as if we were children or Martians (**24.56**). In *Life in Denmark* (1972), people enact their daily routines in an eerie black space. "I'm very interested," Leth admitted, "in making the banal exotic."[8]

Leth found greater fame late in life through his participation in *The Five Obstructions* (2003), a collaboration with Lars von Trier (see Genre and Arthouse Exports p. 686). The film was another teasing merger of experimental and documentary cinema. At the start, von Trier challenges Leth to make five new versions of *The Perfect Human*, under constraints that von Trier will set. In one version, each shot must be one second long; another version must be filmed in the most poverty-stricken place on earth (**Color Plate 24.15**). Leth's ingenious responses to von Trier's "obstructions" show that arbitrary limits can foster creativity in both documentaries and experimental films.

Similarly strict were Liu Jiayin's home-made films about her parents. She documented her father's leather-goods craftsmanship in *Oxhide* (China, 2005), abstracting it through home-made widescreen masking created out of construction paper. *Oxhide II* (2009) formalizes the domestic routine of making dumplings (**24.57**). A rigorous spatial structure leaves room for moments of intimacy and revelations about the family's failing business. Ben Rivers's *Two Years at Sea* (the United Kingdom, 2011) also uses the geometry supplied by the widescreen, along with very long takes and an almost wordless sound track, to turn his portrait of a rural hermit into an exercise in abstract space and time.

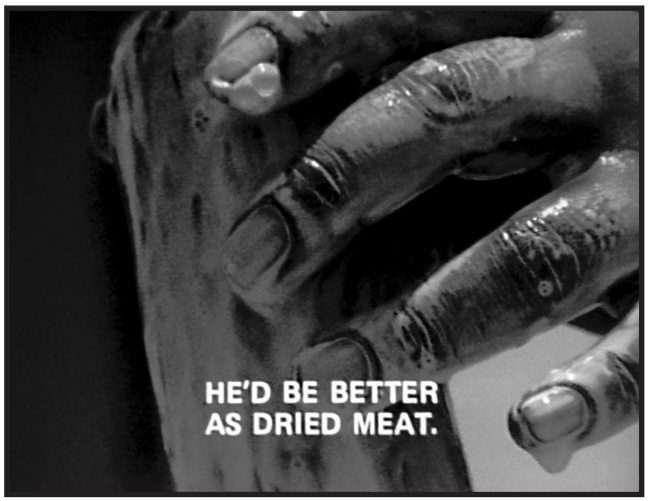
Throughout this period, filmmakers merged ethnographic impulses with experimental techniques. In *Fake Fruit Factory* (1986), Chick Strand relies on extreme close-ups of women's hands making artificial fruit, yielding quick impressions of the feel of the tasks (**24.58**). Nikolaus Geyrhalter's *Our Daily Bread* (2005) uses flat, frontal imagery reminiscent of Structural Film to record factory farming around the world (**Color Plate 24.16**). Ethnography moved closer to home in Marlon Riggs's *Tongues Untied* (1996). Somewhat in the spirit of Maya Deren's *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (see The First Postwar Decade:

The Perfect Human

24.56 "Look," explains the faux-naive narrator, "now she lies down. How does she lie down? Like this. Here is the perfect human when she is lying down" (*The Perfect Human*).

Oxhide

24.57 In *Oxhide II*, rigorously patterned compositions move clockwise around the table and create micro-landscapes of utensils and gestures.



Fake Fruit Factory

24.58 *Fake Fruit Factory* sometimes translates the offscreen dialogue with titles but makes little attempt to identify individual workers in the manner of standard documentaries.

Tongues Untied

24.59 A sequence of *Tongues Untied* illustrates communicative finger snaps among gay African American men.

Maya Deren p. 433), he filled the image track with staged scenes illustrating the social rituals of gay Black men in America (**24.59**). Riggs revamped the synthetic documentary format by scripting the commentary supplied by talking heads and voice-over choruses.

Along similar lines, the Sensory Ethnography Lab at Harvard University became a center of experimental documentary. *Manakamana* (2013) recalls the time blocks of Structural Film: very long takes show passengers on a cable car en route to a Hindu shrine, with the sweeping landscape behind them changing gradually.

The most daring and disorienting of the Lab's efforts was *Leviathan* (2012). Instead of a tidy account of the work of fishermen on a New England trawler, the film conjures up the giddy hallucinations announced in an opening title: "The depths churn like a boiling cauldron." Using digital GoPro cameras lashed to their heads, filmmakers Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel tried to keep up with the work in the dark, heaving seas. They anchored cameras to greasy decks and lowered them under water. This all-out tactic captured viewpoints never seen before, including glimpses of gulls swarming to scavenge fish from nets (**Color Plate 24.17**). Where traditional documentaries seek to convey orderly ideas and emotions, *Leviathan*'s "sensory ethnography" renders a dangerous way of life as a chaotic, tactile experience.

Film, Video, and Entry into the Museum

From the late 1960s onward, filmmakers had to acknowledge the powerful electronic media of television, cable, and videocassette. Those pressures increased with the rise of digital media and the Internet in the 2000s.

The Impact of Video For documentarists, the shift to the small screen was fairly smooth. Television was an important funding source and exhibition venue; most of Wiseman's films, for instance, were initially made for broadcast. The introduction in 1965 of *portapaks*—cameras using 1-inch reel-to-reel tape, then in 1971 ones using 3/4-inch tape in "U-matic" cartridges—gave video the flexibility of Direct Cinema. The U-matic system quickly replaced 16 mm film for much broadcast reporting. By the 2000s, lightweight cameras made shooting on digital video the universal standard.

Video also boosted the market for documentaries. Cable television had an appetite for them, and home video players, which went on the market in the late 1970s, increased viewer demand for compilation films and how-to documentaries. The cassette format, followed by the laserdisc and the DVD, encouraged schools, libraries, and businesses to collect nonfiction films. From 2000, as download speeds grew, the Internet was able to offer a colossal range of documentaries, both professional and amateur. Cat videos and prank footage recalled the appeal of the Lumières' *actualités*.

The rise of video had a more complex effect on the experimental cinema. Throughout the 1970s, fairly strict lines separated avant-garde film from video art, which was largely confined to performance pieces and gallery installations. In the early 1980s, George Kuchar and Punk filmmakers embraced video when portable cameras became available in Beta and VHS cassette formats.

Crossroad

24.60 Phil Solomon and Mark LaPore's *Crossroad* (2005) turns the *Grand Theft Auto* video game into something more eerie and melancholy.

Of Oz the Wizard

24.61 For *Of Oz the Wizard*, each word is presented in the chronological order of the original scenes using it, so that the entire movie becomes replayed as fragments.

Some experimentalists clung to the vanishing super-8 mm gauge, but, by the end of the decade, avant-garde film and video art had grown much closer together. Festivals exhibited the two side by side; cooperatives distributed works in both formats and distributors made avant-garde classics available to the general public on VHS and DVD. Video fulfilled Brakhage's dream that average citizens could collect experimental films to watch at home.

Experimental filmmakers, faced with the discontinuation of super-8 mm and the great expense of 16 mm, turned increasingly to the video format. Structural Film continued the tradition of *cinéma pur* launched by Henri Chomette and Germaine Dulac in the 1920s (see Cinema and the Other Arts p. 77). It aimed to expose "film as film"—its ultimate materials, its essential procedures. Yet Michael Snow remarked in 1989, "'Film as film' is reaching its end. . . . Film will continue as a video representation/reproduction."[9]

At the level of form and style, the two media intertwined. Some experimentalists' song-based films had looked forward to the music-video format: Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* furnished an early model, while Bruce Conner's *Mongoloid* (1978) film for Devo and Derek Jarman's *Broken English: Three Songs by Marianne Faithful* (1979) also pointed the way. Music videos borrowed from the avant-garde tradition well into the new century. Radiohead's *Daydreaming* (2016) echoed 1940s trance films, while Beyoncé's *Lemonade* (2016) recalled the identity quests of Maya Deren.

Since the 1980s, documentarists and avant-garde filmmakers freely incorporated television and video materials. Stylized reenactments in *The Thin Blue Line* refer as much to "true-crime" reportage as to Flaherty's restagings; Todd Haynes's *Poison* (1991) cites not only Anger's *Fireworks*, Genet's *Chant d'amour*, and film noir but also soap operas and "unsolved-mysteries" programs. A new genre of experimental film emerged when filmmakers began absorbing, and sometimes criticizing, video games (**24.60**). Peggy Ahwesh's *She Puppet* (2001) makes a feminist point with a montage of Lara Croft's various roles, including victim of violence (**Color Plate 24.18**).

Apart from shooting on digital video, many were posting their work on streaming platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo. Thousands of films were created specifically for the Internet. The comparative ease of digital editing allowed a steady flood of avant-garde compilation films that relied on the web's remix aesthetic. One of the most engaging was Matt Bucy's *Of Oz the Wizard* (2016), a re-edited version of *The Wizard of Oz* that pulled every word from the film's dialogue and then cut together the corresponding shots in alphabetical order (**24.61**). The result not only discloses the most common words in the original but also creates its own hypnotic rhythm.

Movies in Museums Brakhage, Frampton, and other experimentalists had dreamed of joining the fine-arts world. Why couldn't cinema achieve the dignity of painting and sculpture? Why couldn't filmmakers sell their work as painters sold theirs? It was not until the 1990s that art galleries began to nurture avant-garde filmmaking, although sometimes they detached it from the traditions of experimental cinema.

As curators began to incorporate more photography and video into their programs, museums became multimedia spaces. The 1990s trend toward "installation" art favored

collections of thematically related painting, photos, sound fields, and moving images. Installation art brought paracinema into museums, so that Anthony McCall could recreate *Line Describing a Cone* as a continuous environment.

The art world began to embrace what were called moving-image or projected-image works, usually involving both film and video. These pieces extended traditional avant-garde strategies, while offering experiences that could not be obtained in a traditional film-viewing situation. Structural filmmakers had slowed down their found footage, but Douglas Gordon's video work *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) went much farther. Stretching Hitchcock's *Psycho* to a full day, frame by frame, Gordon assumed that viewers would drift in and out of the installation, with no one able to experience the whole.

In a gallery, a film could be part of a multimedia ensemble. The British painter Tacita Dean devoted several pieces to a yacht racer who failed in his efforts to sail around the world. The installations included maps, charts, paintings, photographs, newsreel footage, and purpose-made films, as well as elaborate projection machines designed by Dean.

Similarly, Sharon Lockhart's films shared museum space with her large-format photographs. In *Goshogaoka* (1997), six static ten-minute shots capture Japanese schoolgirls performing exercises, some of them very repetitive, others more unpredictable (**Color Plate 24.19**). Lockhart's long takes, geometrical framing, and attention to gradually changing details owed a debt to Structural Film, particularly to James Benning's work. But Benning's films were screened in film festivals and college courses, while *Goshogaoka* needed to be seen in relation to Lockhart's photographs, which present the girl athletes in oddly stiff poses drawn from sports photography. The two media suggest contrasting concepts of time and movement.

Another gallery-based filmmaker was Matthew Barney. The five films in his *Cremaster* cycle (1994–2002) presented visually arresting narratives, often reminiscent of horror films (**Color Plate 24.20**). They also provided obscure allegories of bits of American history, such as Gary Gilmore's 1976 crime spree. Museums, not independent film cooperatives or college campuses, were the primary venue for the *Cremaster* films. The screenings were often accompanied by vast exhibitions of drawings, photographs, sculptures, and even props and sets created for the films. Like Lockhart and Dean, Barney established a network of personal motifs across media, making the films only one aspect of a broader aesthetic statement. At the same time, many of the *Cremaster* artifacts were available for sale as fine-art pieces.

Although *Cremaster* played a few theaters, most gallery artists' films would not be shown commercially or distributed on DVD. Gallery exclusivity was pushed to a new limit by Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010). Marclay and his assistants scoured films for shots of clocks and surrounded them with other scavenged imagery. Marclay then arranged the clock shots to proceed chronologically, hour by hour and minute by minute, across one day. In projection, the twenty-four-hour video is synchronized with the local time, so that *The Clock* functions as exactly what it title says it is.

Marclay made only six copies of the film available for sale, at about half a million dollars each. Screenings were always heavily attended, although almost no one could claim to have seen the entire work at one sitting. Like the *Cremaster* cycle, *The Clock* became a rare art object. Brakhage and Frampton's hopes of entering the temples of the fine arts were better realized by creators already established in the gallery scene.

However fresh many of these developments were, they continued formal strategies established in earlier periods. *The Clock* was a new variant on the associative compilation film pioneered by Joseph Cornell, Bruce Conner, and others. *Cremaster* reworked poetic and mythical narratives opened up by Maya Deren and Kenneth Anger. *Leviathan* was reminiscent of Brakhage's gestural camerawork, although now the lens was detached from the eye of the filmmaker. *Of Oz the Wizard* recalls the alphabetical matrix of Frampton's *Zorns Lemma*. Many of the 2000s and 2010s filmmakers were unaware of their predecessors, but their works joined a rich, varied tradition.

From the late 1960s onward, documentary filmmakers explored various ways of analyzing society, arguing for ideas, and pressing for political change. Some filmmakers embraced Direct Cinema, while others adapted it to new needs. Some criticized documentary conventions, while others created films for a broad popular audience. Avant-gardists launched the rigorous experiments of Structural film, the dominant movement of the period. But other filmmakers moved toward narrative forms, paracinema, and social critique. Eventually, some mixed-media works were more likely to end in museums than screening rooms. Along all these dimensions, documentary and experimental cinema were flourishing well into the new century.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Ira Halberstadt, "An Interview with Fred Wiseman," *Filmmakers Newsletter* 7, no. 4 (February 1974): 25.
2. Quoted in Thomas W. Benson and Carolyn Anderson, *Reality Fictions: The Films of Frederick Wiseman* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 149.

3. Quoted in "The Act of Killing: Press Notes," at http://theactofkilling.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/THE_ACT_OF_KILLING_press_notes_Berlin2013.pdf.
4. Quoted in John Anderson, "Of Crime and Perception at Abu Ghraib," *The New York Times* (April 20, 2008), available at www.nytimes.com/2008/04/20/movies/20ande.html.
5. Hollis Frampton, "Notes on Composing in Film," in *Circles of Confusion: Film–Photography–Video: Texts 1968-1980* (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1983), p. 119.
6. Jonathan Walley, "The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film," *October* 103 (Winter 2003): 17.
7. Anthony McCall, "Two Statements: *Line Describing a Cone*," in *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), p. 250.
8. Quoted in "Jørgen Leth," in Mette Hjort and Ib Bondebjerg, *The Danish Directors: Dialogues on a Contemporary National Cinema* (Bristol: Intellect, 2001), p. 63.
9. Quoted in *International Experimental Film Congress* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989), p. 42.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

"Errol Morris, boy detective"

On animated documentaries: "Showing what can't be filmed"

On a mockumentary: "*Borat*: Keep it stupid, simple"

On Phil Solomon: "Solomonic judgments"

"Lewis Klahr X3, X4"

"Paolo Gioli, maximal minimalist"

On Christian Marclay's *The Clock*: "Time piece"

CHAPTER 25

Les amants réguliers

NEW CINEMAS AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS: EUROPE AND THE USSR SINCE THE 1970s

My joy

The recovery of the Hollywood industry during the 1970s (see Chapter 22) struck other countries hard. Hollywood blockbusters benefited local exhibitors, but they threatened local production. More than ever, the problem was competing with the world's most powerful film industry. How could a filmmaker attract local audiences? How could a domestic film get distributed in other countries?

Throughout Chapters 25, 26, and 27 we will see filmmakers in various countries trying out similar strategies. Some filmmakers sought to make entertainment for a broad local audience. They might try to imitate the US movie product with big budgets and famous stars. Or they might differentiate the local films from Hollywood offerings, appealing to the national culture. This approach had been used in earlier eras, as when France, Germany, and the USSR developed stylistic movements in the 1920s (see Chapters 4–6).

Another option was to go beyond national borders. This strategy was most systematically taken up through coproductions, which had become common in Western Europe during the 1960s (see International Cooperation p. 312). The films featured stars and staff drawn from several countries and were internationally financed, often by government subsidies, the European Union (EU), and media conglomerates.

Instead of aiming at a mass market, a project, whether a coproduction or not, might target festivals and the international art-cinema market. In this way, fresh talent might gain attention on the global scene. Just as the Nouvelle Vague and other "new waves" and "young cinemas" had emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, parallel trends surfaced in Germany, the USSR, and elsewhere from the 1970s onward.

In the 1970s and 1980s, these strategies were most apparent in Western Europe. After 1989, nations freed from Soviet domination sought to enter the world cinema market. The USSR and Eastern Europe, growing closer to

the West, adopted the same mix of options: seeking local and regional appeal, imitating Hollywood or offering something with strongly national flavor, seeking attention at festivals, and spotlighting original younger filmmakers.

WESTERN EUROPE

Crisis in the Industry

By the mid-1970s, Europe's postwar boom was over. In 1973, the Middle East's petroleum-producing countries began raising the price of oil. This "oil shock" created inflation, unemployment, and a recession that lasted throughout the decade. Politically, the appeal of left-wing parties waned, and more conservative governments came to power. Although the left won some victories, as with Socialist François Mitterand's 1981 election to the French presidency, all governments faced persistent inflation and recession. Even leftist regimes took austerity measures that moved them closer to the center. During the same period, however, right-wing dictatorships in Spain, Greece, and Portugal ended and democratic reforms were introduced.

During the 1980s, Western Europe's economy restabilized. The European Community (EC) began to plan a unified market that, with 320 million people, could compete with the United States and Japan. A European assembly, created in 1979, started to consider the possibility of a "Single Europe." In 1994, the EC was renamed the EU, with fifteen member countries; in 2002, the Euro became the organization's common currency. By 2016, the Union comprised twenty-eight countries and more than half a billion citizens.

The 1970s and 1980s gave the European film industry severe problems. Broadcast television and home video were reducing film audiences. Although in some countries production increased, the figures were artificially inflated by the growing number of pornographic films. Box-office income rose or remained steady, but this was chiefly due to rising ticket prices. As in the United States, a few releases gained the biggest portion of box-office revenues.

Most theatrical income went to Hollywood. After World War II, the majors set up powerful distribution companies in Europe, ensuring US pictures the best theaters and blocking imports from other countries. Moreover, the countries that had highly concentrated ownership of exhibition chains (France, West Germany, and Great Britain) welcomed the lucrative US product. Consequently, despite quotas, taxes, and other protectionist measures, American films dominated Europe. In some countries, they claimed 90 percent of the box-office take.

Europeans offered no coordinated response to these problems. For a time, there was hope that American financing might help the more visible auteurs. Bernardo Bertolucci and New German directors won such support in the 1970s. Some of the Majors established "classics" divisions to distribute foreign pictures in the United States. But with the exception of Bertolucci's scandalous *Last Tango in Paris* (1973), most Hollywood-supported art movies proved unsuccessful.

National cinemas survived thanks to the state subsidies put into place after World War II (see Protectionist Measures p. 311). Governments made funds available to producers through loans, grants, and prizes. Several countries modeled aid upon France's policy of *avance sur recettes* (advance on receipts): giving funding before production on the expectation of repayment from a percentage of the film's earnings. In Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and Belgium, ministries and cultural bodies made funding available. In the United Kingdom, producers' demands on the National Film Finance Corporation were augmented by the National Film Development Fund, created in 1976. Governments drew such funds from general revenues and from taxes on tickets or license fees for televisions, VCRs, and even blank videocassettes.

State support remained fairly strong over the decades, even during the 2008 recession. In 2013, European governments gave more than $4 billion to film and television projects. In 2016, Spain established a fund of $35 million for feature production, while Germany, one of the top EU film industries, boosted its subsidy to $160 million. Because a typical European budget ran less than $3 million, these funds went a long way. Even distribution companies enjoyed some state support. France was proud of providing $49 million, mostly to small distributors, every year.

European filmmakers could also rely on coproductions. Some coproductions resulted simply from independent companies pooling resources, but most were "official" or "treaty-based." These allowed producers to draw on state subsidies from two or more countries. The prototypical "Eurofilm" might have stars from Italy, France, and Germany, with a director from one country, a mixed-nations crew, and location shooting in several regions. After the collapse of the USSR in 1989–1991, East–West coproductions increased.

Most films were not coproductions, but the system was essential for ambitious projects, particularly in smaller countries. Over the years, for example, Danish filmmakers partnered with more than fifty countries. French language films in bilingual Belgium were heavily dependent on coproductions with France.

Between 1975 and the late 2010s, three major funding strategies helped national cinemas compete with Hollywood.

Television Support Up to the mid-1970s, European television was dominated by state-owned public agencies, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), France's ORTF, and Italy's RAI. These kept out independent television companies, banned advertising, and showcased national culture. Although some European television companies financed auteur directors in the 1960s and early 1970s, West Germany was the first country to systematically use national television to support filmmaking.

The country had no private channels and three public ones. The Young German Film launched at the 1962 Oberhausen festival (see Young German Film p. 401) had suffered from cutbacks in government funding, but in 1974 a new Film and Television Agreement offered favorable terms for joint productions. Between 1974 and 1978, government television helped fund films to be broadcast after they had completed a theatrical run. The agreement acknowledged the possibility that the Autorenfilm, or "author's cinema," could lift television above its normal programming by appeals to high art and national culture.

The 1974 agreement created a fresh burst of energy and led many New German filmmakers to international reputations and financing. The new arrangement also gave German women directors their first significant chance to make features.

Other nations' state-sponsored television agencies took up film financing in the German mode, supplementing coproduction arrangements with government subsidy. Soon, however, the depression of the mid-1970s and the declining income of public broadcasting forced many governments to admit commercial channels to the airwaves. As commercial television expanded, audiences deserted theaters. In some countries, movie attendance dropped by half.

Yet television also proved to be a benefactor because the new broadcasters needed films to program. As a result, private television firms started funding features. Italy's Silvio Berlusconi, owner of several networks, sometimes supplied 40 percent of all investment in Italian production. In France, Canal Plus, a cable company, was required by law to invest in production. Its production arm StudioCanal became a major funding source for world filmmaking, backing hits such as *Amélie* (2001), *Love Actually* (2003), *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), and *The Imitation Game* (2014).

In the United Kingdom, new state policies turned producers toward television. Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, adhering to a policy of privatization, abolished the quota in 1982 and the Eady levy three years later. Government funding for film production virtually ceased. England's Channel 4 became a central financier, producing about twelve films a year, including such international successes as *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985; **25.1**). The BBC gave television work to filmmakers who went on to cinema careers. It broadcast dramas by Ken Loach, Alan Clarke, and other directors who would push British features toward raw realism (**25.2**), and it enabled Aardman Animations to find a global audience (see Television and Aardman Animations box).

My Beautiful Laundrette

25.1 Stephen Frear's *My Beautiful Laundrette* was originally intended as a television film, but its depiction of racism, homosexuality, and class struggle led to a successful release in theaters. Here a young Pakistani and his white lover confront a hostile gang.

Scum

25.2 Alan Clarke made *Scum* (1979), a violent study of reformatory conditions, as a theatrical feature after the BBC banned his television version.

TELEVISION AND AARDMAN ANIMATIONS

Aardman Animations, based in Bristol, England, began in 1976 as a small firm making commissioned shorts for television. Although its founders, Peter Lord and David Sproxton, used various animation techniques, the company's best-known films involved Plasticine (clay-based) animation. In their early BBC "Lip Sync" series, Lord and Sproxton created animated scenes using actual interviews as soundtracks. In 1986, Aardman achieved wider fame with Peter Gabriel's music video *Sledgehammer*. Aardman branched into television advertising as well.

One of the animators for *Sledgehammer* was Nick Park. His "Lip Sync" short, *Creature Comforts*, parodied talking-heads documentaries by interviewing zoo animals about their living conditions. It was so popular that it was shown in theaters and brought Park the first of four animation Oscars. Aardman's many other shorts included Peter Lord's *Wat's Pig* (1996) and Peter Peake's *Pib and Pog* (1994), a send-up of sickly sweet children's programs. Most Aardman shorts were commissioned by the BBC and Channel 4, though some premiered in theaters.

Aardman's best-known characters, the eccentric inventor Wallace and his put-upon dog Gromit, made their debut in Park's *A Grand Day Out* (1989). Park won Academy Awards for his next three Wallace and Gromit films. *The Wrong Trousers* (1993) was a film-noir parody starring a villainous penguin, and in *A Close Shave* (1995), Gromit saves a herd of sheep. *Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005) became the duo's first feature. Each of the shorts was premiered on the BBC to record viewership.

Chicken Run (2000) moved Aardman into studio filmmaking when DreamWorks signed the firm to a five-feature contract. Although the age of computer animation had begun, the Aardman team stuck to Plasticine and created elaborate scenes parodying prisoner-of-war movies (**Color Plate 25.1**). Some doubted that British animation could succeed overseas, but *Chicken Run* was one of America's top-grossing films that year.

In 2006, the company produced its first computer-animated feature, *Flushed Away*, before returning to clay animation with *Arthur Christmas* (2011) and other stop-motion films, including *The Shaun the Sheep Movie* (2015), based on TV shorts. Park returned to features with the prehistoric comedy, *Early Man* (2018). Aardman's emergence shows dramatically how television commissions could give European filmmakers an opportunity to reach a worldwide audience. It also shows how films originally designed for a local audience can achieve wider popularity.

The rise of commercial broadcasting did not wholly eclipse public television. In 1992, state-sponsored French and German channels combined to form ARTE, a cultural-affairs channel available in five languages across Europe. ARTE bought post-theatrical rights to films, funded new productions, and supported restorations of classics. The channel helped produce *Dancer in the Dark* (Denmark, 2000), *The Lives of Others* (Germany, 2006), *Son of Rambow* (United Kingdom 2007), and *The Red Turtle* (France, 2016).

Private Investment Governments tried to steer private funding to cinema. A few countries offered tax-sheltered investments. By 2004, the German tax funds were pumping an astonishing $3 billion per year into movie production, distribution, and marketing. France energetically launched private investment companies too. These *Sociétés pour le financement de l' industrie cinématographique et audiovisuelle* (SOFICAs) offered tax-exempt investments to individuals, banks, and companies buying rights to films' future earnings. By the early 1990s, 25 percent of French production funds derived from SOFICAs, and throughout the 2010s they continued to be important financiers.

Other sources of money were media conglomerates, investment groups, and banking concerns. Crédit Lyonnais, an international bank, became a principal source of loans to European and American companies during the 1980s. StudioCanal, Berlusconi of Italy, Prisa of Spain, Britain's Thorn-EMI (which had absorbed the Rank theater chain), PolyGram of the Netherlands, and Bertelsmann of West Germany began backing films made outside their home countries.

The European Community Beyond television support and private investment, another strategy for boosting European cinema was launched by the European Community. In 1991, with its twelve member nations looking toward integration at the end of the century, the European Union founded MEDIA, a program to develop the continent's audiovisual industries. MEDIA funded production projects through loans and created the European Film Distribution Office, which offered financial incentives for national distributors to import films. MEDIA also founded the European Film Promotion agency, which helped create festival events and supported filmmakers, actors, and sales agents' travel. In 2014, MEDIA was incorporated into the

Creative Europe program, which backed literature, libraries, translation, and other efforts beyond film and television.

Another EC commission, Eurimages, offered an *avance sur recettes* for coproductions. After its founding in 1988, Eurimages backed hundreds of films, eventually broadening its remit to include filmmakers in Turkey and Eastern Europe. MEDIA also supported the Europa cinema chain, a consortium of theaters pledged to screen a certain number of European films.

Since the 1950s, coproductions and internationally financed projects had been accused of being bland "Eurofilms," lacking any distinctive national qualities. This expressed many Europeans' worries that a Single Europe would iron out differences among cultures. With the entry of the EU and the new importance of international investment and television money, worries about Eurofilms intensified. The big international film, following the model of the Hollywood epics of the 1950s and 1960s, was epitomized in Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* (1987), but diversified financing was necessary for less grandiose projects as well. Bille August's *Best Intentions* (1992) was wryly described as a Swedish–Danish–Norwegian–Icelandic–Finnish–British–German–French–Italian film.

The strategies outlined here overlapped; any one film might be financed by a mix of national subsidies, coproduction, television, private capital, and EU agencies. Jaco Van Dormaël's *Toto le héros* ("Toto the Hero," 1991) was funded by the Belgian government's *avance sur recettes*, as well as by Germany's ZDF, French public television, Belgian public television, and Canal Plus. *Toto* also benefited from MEDIA, Eurimages, and the EC's European Script Fund. After winning a major prize at the Cannes Film Festival, the film attracted audiences around the world. Some observers criticized it as "Europudding" or called it *Toto l'Euro*, but others saw it as an emblem of how a small first feature from a minor producing country could find an audience thanks to a package of European funding.

Synchronized with these developments were the creation of the European Film Academy, which gave annual achievement awards modeled on the American Oscars, and the establishment of Lumière, a Lisbon-based agency coordinating the activity of European archives. The European Film Promotion aimed at getting young audiences interested in film, while festivals supported first-time filmmakers through residencies, workshops, and premieres.

The explosion of funding sources demanded new players who could master the rules. In the 1990s and 2000s, sales agents became key players. They would find money, plan a film's rollout in festivals and theaters, design marketing campaigns with local distributors, and in some cases contribute directly to the budget.

Sales agents with strong track records, such as Celluloid Dreams and Fortissimo, could reassure investors, and they had clout with film festivals (see Chapter 29). Sales agents helped filmmakers shape their films for the world market, even suggesting that sequences be recut. Soon the sales agents were starting to finance, produce, and distribute films. Celluloid Dreams, for instance, asked its filmmakers to collaborate on *2000 Seen By* (2000) and helped fund the Berlin prize-winner *Paradise Now* (2005).

Back in the 1920s, filmmakers had laid the groundwork for a Film Europe market that could compete with the United States (see "Film Europe" p. 145). That failed. In the late 1980s, some cross-border cooperation emerged out of the efforts of national governments, television companies, investment concerns, and EU agencies. But again a Film Europe did not coalesce. Despite all the funding initiatives, production never threatened Hollywood's dominance. By the late 2010s, American films commanded two-thirds of the EU box office.

As if ignoring Hollywood's dominance, industries opted for overproduction. In 1970, nearly 900 Western European features were released. Television competition and recessions cut the number to about 650 through the 1980s. But then production swelled, hitting an astonishing 1,100–1,300 annual releases in the 2010s. Very few of these would be screened outside their country of origin, and almost none would show a profit. Like museums, opera, and other cultural institutions, filmmaking was subsidized. It provided hundreds of thousands of jobs, and it maintained distinctive European standards in entertainment and film art.

National Traditions and International Trends

European popular genres maintained their stability throughout the period. Most filmmakers aimed at their local public, but strong genre traditions helped some films find international audiences.

Exportable items included Italian comedy dramas such as *Bread and Chocolate* (1973), *Life Is Beautiful* (1997), and *The Great Beauty* (2013). French comedies were perennial crossovers, from *Cousin Cousine* (1975) to *The Intouchables* (2011). Britain trademarked eccentric humor in the postwar era and maintained it with the Monty Python films and genre spoofs such as *Johnny English* (2003) and *Hot Fuzz* (2007). French cop films, with their drab routines and resigned melancholy, held perennial appeal, from *Police Python 357* (1976) and *L.627* (1992) to *36 Quai des orfèvres* (2004) and *Le Petit lieutenant* (2005). British crime films invoked their own noirish tradition, as in *Mona Lisa* (1986; **Color Plate 25.2**),

District B13

25.3 Competing with American action films, Luc Besson produced *District B13* (2005), a delirious blend of gunplay, martial arts, social criticism, and hip-hop music set among Parisian drug gangs.

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels (1998), *Croupier* (1999), and *Sexy Beast* (2001). German comedies were usually not export material, but *Manitou's Shoe* (2001), *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003), and *Toni Erdmann* (2016) sold briskly around the world.

Throughout film history, some overseas filmmakers have imitated Hollywood storytelling. In Europe at this time, the most consistently successful blend of American pacing and local culture was created by France's Luc Besson. Starting out as something of an experimentalist, he quickly turned toward commercial thrillers (*Nikita*, 1990; *Léon the Professional*, 1994). He founded his own studio, EuropaCorp, and became a "creative producer" on the Hollywood model, originating a project's concept and script and hiring others to direct (**25.3**).

An International Tradition of Quality The 1970s–1980s decline in attendance and export markets, the conservatism of investors, and competition from Hollywood drove many producers and directors toward more accessible filmmaking. European countries concentrated on films for regional audiences, with a hope of occasionally breaking into the US market. To the end of the twentieth century and beyond, most filmmaking would avoid the challenging disruptions of political modernism (see Chapter 23). The French cinema had had its own Tradition of Quality (see The Tradition of Quality p. 329) and now an international version, with literary values and viewer-friendly treatment, offered new opportunities—even to directors who had earlier embraced more radical styles.

On the whole, the most exportable European films were those that carried some degree of prestige: festival prizes, famous literary sources, or the name of a major director. One sign of the weakening of hardcore auteurism was the fact that established directors participated in the new Euro-film by creating prestige pictures. Andrzej Wajda made films in France (*Danton*, 1983) and West Germany. Ermanno Olmi's *Tree of the Wooden Clogs* (Italy, 1978) marked a return to Neorealism, recreating the life of nineteenth-century peasants in their original dialect but also giving them the dimension of legend. Carlos Saura's prodigious output drew on Spanish culture: *Blood Wedding* (1981), *Carmen* (1983), and *El Amor brujo* ("Love, the Magician," 1986) employed indigenous dance, while *El Dorado* (1988), a lavish coproduction with Italy, presented Spanish colonialism as a brutal political game. Roman Polanski created a string of elegant thrillers and literary adaptations.

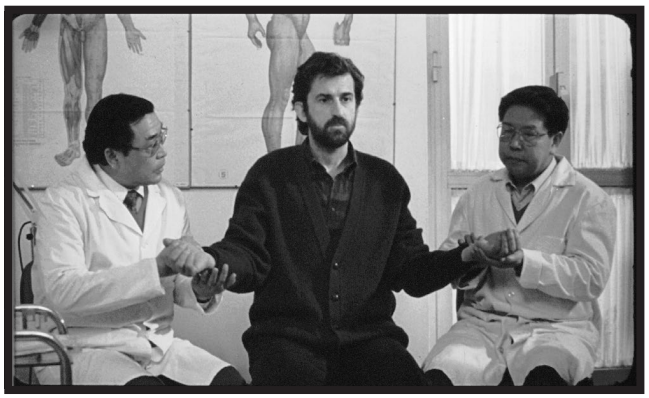
Vittorio and Paolo Taviani, who had promoted a humanistic, populist political cinema during the 1960s and early 1970s, became acclaimed directors with the success of *Padre Padrone* (1977). They sealed their reputation with a mythic recasting of the Neorealist tradition, *Night of the Shooting Stars* (1982; **Color Plate 25.3**), and a luxuriant adaptation of Luigi Pirandello stories, *Kaos* (1984). *Good Morning Babylon* (1987) returns in both theme and structure to the romantic simplicity of the American silent cinema.

More mordant wit was on display in Ettore Scola, who won international notice with *We All Loved Each Other So Much* (Italy, 1974), a comment on the political disillusionments of postwar Italian history. With that film, *A Special Day* (1977), and *Le Bal* ("The Ball," 1983), he offered mild experimentation and a comedy of social observation. *Le Bal* is set entirely in a French dance hall during different eras, and the whole film is played without dialogue. Scola's close-ups heighten the caricatural performances, and he cleverly manipulates visual design, as when the Popular Front sequence drains all color from the shot save that of the Communist flag.

The Tavianis and Scola were joined by the younger Nanni Moretti. He began his career with anarchic, pseudo-underground comedies (*Ecce Bombo*, 1978) before developing a brand of bemused humor devoted to a generation confronting the failure of left-wing ideals. Moretti typically plays a slightly neurotic hero encountering the frustrations of modern society. In *Palombella Rossa* (1989), a young Communist Party official suffers from amnesia and must relearn correct doctrine; his naive questions satirize a spectrum of political opinions. To add to the humor, most of the film is set in a swimming pool during a game of water polo.

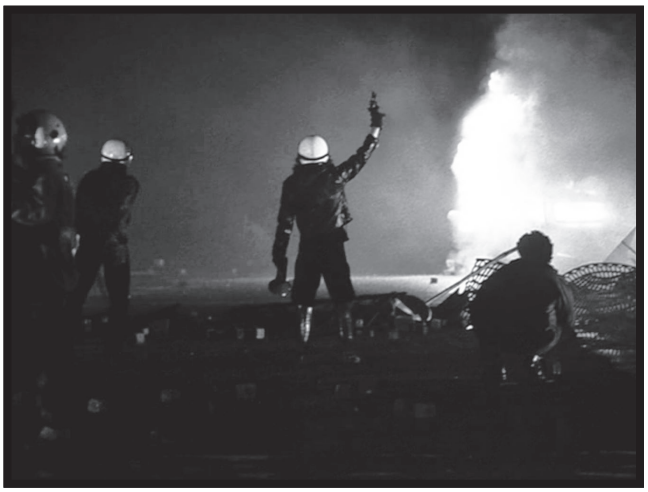
In the poignant *Caro Diario* (*Dear Diary*, 1993), Moretti shares his pleasure in riding his Vespa through Rome and his fear that he has a mysterious disease (**25.4**). Like many filmmakers who started in the 1970s, Moretti turned from large-scale politics to the intimacy of friendship and family devotion. *Aprile* ("April," 1998) celebrates the birth of his child as he is planning a new movie. He funneled his scathing attack on Berlusconi, *The Caiman* (2006), through the story of a mild-mannered producer trying to make a film on a media mogul.

France was the most visible home of the new tradition of quality. The success of Bertrand Blier as a novelist led



Caro Diario

25.4 Poking fun at his own health problems, Moretti is checked by two physicians in *Caro Diario.*



Les amants réguliers

25.5 *Les amants réguliers*: in May 1968, students wearing motorcycle helmets take to the barricades in a battle with police.

him to adapt his own work in *Les Valseuses* ("The Waltzers," 1974). His *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* (1978) earned an Academy Award, while *Too Beautiful for You* (1989) won prizes both at home and abroad. Similarly, the critic-turned-director Bernard Tavernier evoked the golden years of the postwar French cinema by hiring Jean Aurenche (see The Tradition of Quality p. 330) as scenarist and by making such films as *Un Dimanche à la campagne* ("Sunday in the Country," 1984) in homage to Jean Renoir. *Tous les matins du monde* (*All the Mornings of the World*, 1991), by Alain Corneau, portrayed seventeenth-century court life through exquisite baroque music. Olivier Assayas, former editor of *Cahiers du cinéma* and son of a prestigious screenwriter, revamped romantic realism in films such as *Fin août, début septembre* ("End of August, Beginning of September," 1999).

Other directors contributed astringent personal dramas to the trend. The indefatigable Eric Rohmer alternated such Europroductions as *Triple Agent* (2004) with his trademark social comedies like *Autumn Tale* (1998). Philippe Garrel, a practiced director of elegant, subdued studies of couples (e.g., *La Naissance de l'amour*, "The Birth of Love," 1993), attracted fresh attention with *Les Amants réguliers* ("Regular Lovers," 2005), which concentrated on young people caught up in sex, opium, and the revolt of May 1968 (**25.5**). A newer talent, Arnold Desplechin, worked in a similar vein in *Kings and Queen* (2004), while François Ozon broke through with tense dramas like *Swimming Pool* (2003) and ventured into prestigious historical fiction with *Frantz* (2016).

The Spaniard Victor Erice made more modest films, but they attracted attention for their calm beauty and their exploration of childhood as a time of fantasy and mystery. *Spirit of the Beehive* (1972), set in 1930s Spain, follows a little girl who believes that the resistance fighter she hides is a counterpart to the monster from *Frankenstein*. *El Sur* ("The South," 1983) is centered on an adolescent who discovers her father's love affair.

The tiny country of Denmark contributed to the quality trend with the screenplays and directorial efforts of Anders Thomas Jensen (*The Green Butchers*, 2003) and especially with a pair of women directors. Lone Scherfig created one of Denmark's biggest successes in the ensemble comedy *Italian for Beginners* (2000) and moved into pan-European production with *Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself* (2002). Susanne Bier won acclaim with the intimate dramas *Open Hearts* (2002), *Brothers* (2004), and *After the Wedding* (2006). She probed the feelings of guilt and inadequacy that drive couples and families apart, often revealed in fleeting glances and gestures. Both went on to English-language productions: Scherfig with *One Day* (the United States, 2011) and *Their Finest* (the United Kingdom, 2016), and Bier with *Things We Lost in the Fire* (the United States, 2007) and *Serena* (the United States, 2014).

Socially Critical Naturalism Reinforcing the trend toward thoughtful, accessible cinema was a turn toward realism. Some directors put aside the self-conscious techniques of modernism in favor of direct, often harsh portrayal of life in the raw.

In the early 1970s, the British Film Institute (BFI) Production Board, which had been formed in 1966 and had concentrated on independent shorts, began funding features as well. One of the first was an autobiographical trilogy by Bill Douglas: *My Childhood* (1972), *My Ain Folk* (1974), and *My Way Home* (1977). In an elliptical, unsentimental fashion, these trace a boy's loveless life in a northern industrial town (**25.6**). At the same period, Ken Loach began using nonprofessional actors, shooting in a

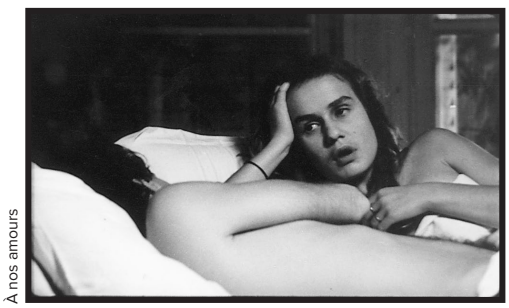
My Childhood

Kes

25.6, *left* *My Childhood* explores the small events of youth as the hero's brother rushes to stand exultantly in the smoke above a passing train.

25.7, *right* The hero of *Kes* shows a flicker of interest in school: asked to tell about his pet falcon, he writes falconry terms on the board.

The Mother and the Whore


À nos amours

25.8, *left* Jean-Pierre Léaud (Antoine Doinel of *The 400 Blows*) as the shifty and selfish protagonist of Eustache's *The Mother and the Whore*.

25.9, *right* *À nos amours*: Sandrine Bonnaire as the middle-class teenager avid for excitement.

quasi-documentary style on location in the industrial north for *Kes* (1969). The film depicts a boy who is miserable in school but becomes fascinated with training a falcon (**25.7**). Over the next forty years, Loach would stubbornly maintain the British tradition of working-class realism in *Riff-Raff* (1990), *Land and Freedom* (1995), *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (2006), and *I, Daniel Blake* (2016).

The BFI also funded the first film of theater director Mike Leigh, *Bleak Moments* (1971), a story of a female office worker living with her mentally handicapped sister. It mixed sad, amusing, and quiet incidents in a manner that was to become typical of Leigh's work. His subsequent dialogue-based depictions of working-class life, produced by the BBC and later Channel 4, balance humor and pathos in depicting social problems, as in *Life Is Sweet* (1991). *Naked* (1993) takes a much bleaker look at poverty in modern Britain through the eyes of an intelligent but violent man.

In 2000, Leigh surprised his admirers with *Topsy-Turvy*, a ripe portrayal of London in the 1880s, when W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan were mounting the operetta *The Mikado* (**Color Plate 25.4**). Despite the musical numbers and lush design, however, Leigh stuck to realism by displaying authentic reconstructions of Victorian stagecraft and by injecting critical references to British imperialism, slum conditions, and the treatment of women. He returned to sympathetic depictions of ordinary Britons with such films as *Vera Drake* (2004), about a kindly woman in 1950s Britain who happens to be an abortionist. *Mr. Turner* (2014) showed the painter caught between the art world and working-class life.

In France, Jean Eustache offered a withering portrait of the self-centered young male, lying and quarreling his way through women's lives, in *The Mother and the Whore* (1972; **25.8**). Maurice Pialat's *Nous ne vieillirons pas ensemble* ("We Won't Grow Old Together," 1972) and *Passe ton bac d'abord* ("First Get Your Degree," 1978) depict middle-class problems such as divorce, unwanted children, and cancer. Pialat's brand of domestic realism won international acceptance in *Loulou* (1980) and *À nos amours* (1983), a story of a girl's coming of age in an era of sexual liberation (**25.9**). Something of the elegant gravity of 1950s French Quality productions came through in his *Sous le soleil de Satan* (1987) and *Van Gogh* (1991), where sometimes shocking violence is handled unsensationally.

The continental tradition of naturalistic observation continued in Erick Zonca's *The Dream Life of Angels* (1998) and Bruno Dumont's *L'Humanité* (1999). The most prolific new naturalists of the 1990s were the Belgian brothers Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne. The Dardennes focused on the bottom rungs of society, examining in unflinching terms how poverty, crime, and violence warp people's values. *Rosetta* (1999) shows a girl driven to crime by unemployment and an alcoholic mother. In

L'Enfant

The Marriage of Maria Braun

25.10, *left* The wavering camera captures a young thief who has just told his girlfriend what has happened to their baby (*L'Enfant*, 2005).

25.11, *right* A pack of cigarettes evokes the privations of postwar Germany in *The Marriage of Maria Braun*.

Le Fils ("The Son," 2002), a lonely carpenter takes a teenage murderer as his assistant, while *L'Enfant* (2005) centers on a young thief who will not accept responsibility for his baby. Like many realists, the Dardennes favor the casualness of the handheld camera, so that loose, uncalculated framings affirm the actuality of what is shown (**25.10**).

Loach, Leigh, Dumont, and the Dardennes remained powerful forces in European cinema throughout the 2010s, demonstrating the continuing appeal of unvarnished realism. Alongside them emerged social-comment films like Abdellatif Kechiche's *Blue Is the Warmest Color* (France, 2013). This drama of young women exploring their lesbian identity kept alive the 1960s precept that "the personal is political." Matteo Garrone's *Gomorrah* (2008) was based on a journalistic exposé of the Neapolitan mafia. Shooting in rundown neighborhoods with largely unknown performers, the film traces how a web of corruption connects several men. It recalls Neorealism in its focus on what ordinary people must do to survive, but it also displays the network-narrative plotting that was emerging among European filmmakers.

Rebels, More or Less Charming The upscale Eurofilm could accommodate some social critique, though nothing as radical in subject or form as was seen in the era of politicized modernism. After New German Cinema had won respect around the world, Rainer Werner Fassbinder stepped onto the international stage with big-budget films featuring renowned stars. His bitter dramas (see New Cinema in West Germany: The Political Wing p. 509) gave way to large-scale coproductions following the success of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978). *Lili Marlene* (1980), *Lola* (1981), and *Querelle* (1982) employ the resources of color, costume, soft focus, and spectacle to stylize the characters' worlds: unrealistic strips of pink light falling across a face (*Lola*) or a tangerine glow emanating from a wharf (*Querelle*). Extreme close-ups of historically exact details interrupt the action of *Maria Braun* (**25.11**).

Fassbinder continued the vein of socially critical melodramas he had explored earlier, but in more muted and accessible form. Determined to remind his viewers of the Nazi past, he presented an epic history of Germany,

Lights in the Dusk

25.12 Another Kaurismäki loser: a night watchman is infatuated with a woman who sets him up as an accomplice in a jewel robbery (*Lights in the Dusk*, 2006).

from the 1920s (*Bolweiser* and *Despair*, both 1977) through the Fascist era (*Lili Marlene*) to the rise of postwar Germany (*Maria Braun*; *Veronika Voss*, 1981; *Lola*). Yet Fassbinder did not wholly abandon his experimental impulses. Postdubbing allowed him to make his soundtracks no less baroque than the settings. *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) and *The Third Generation* (1979) overlaid radio broadcasts, television commentary, and conversations to wrap his characters in a barrage of media noise.

A more glum and minimalist critic of the status quo was Finland's Aki Kaurismäki. He won worldwide notice with the Wenders-like *Ariel* (1989) and the Bressonian *Match Factory Girl* (1989). His cruel deadpan mockery, born partly of a passion for hard-rock music, is most unadulterated in *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (1989), while it is tempered with ironic sentiment in *Vie de bohème* ("Bohemian Life," 1991), *The Man Without a Past* (2002), and *Lights in the Dusk* (2006). Kaurismäki's celebration of naïve, passive losers (**25.12**), his wide-ranging film references, and his satire of middle-class values made him a cult director across Europe.

After debuting with a bloody comic thriller, *Shallow Grave* (1994), the Englishman Danny Boyle made his reputation as a bad boy with the raucous *Trainspotting* (1996). It laced Heroin Chic with grotesque humor and manic shock scenes, casually dismissing just-say-no moralism. Boyle's wide-angle lenses, fashionably shabby sets, and one-line insults were like designer graffiti compared to the rough-edged

realism of Loach and Leigh (**Color Plate 25.5**). Boyle became a mainstream director who found acclaim in the Oscars won by *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008).

Perhaps the most extreme shift to the mainstream was seen in the career of the Spaniard Pedro Almodóvar. He moved from gay underground films to top-tier productions that fused melodrama, suspense, camp, and sex comedy. Almodóvar achieved notoriety with the sex farce *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988; **25.13**), but his later films turned toward melodramas. Like Fassbinder, Almodóvar admired Douglas Sirk, and he began to mount convoluted plots of erotic rivalries, both gay and straight, and pathetic twists of fate. *The Flower of My Secret* (1995) centers on an intellectual woman who secretly writes trashy romances. *All About My Mother* (1999) builds an unlikely family out of a single mother, a pregnant nun, a transvestite prostitute, and an HIV-infected baby. Through a cascade of flashbacks, *Julietta* (2016) traces a widow's search for reconciliation with her daughter.

In Almodóvar's world, nuns become heroin addicts (*Sisters of Night*, aka *Dark Habits*, 1983), a downtrodden wife slays her husband with a hambone (*What Have I Done to Deserve This?*, 1984), a newscaster confesses to murder on television (*High Heels*, 1991), a woman is attracted to a man because he slays bulls (*Matador*, 1986), and another falls for a man who has abducted her (*Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*, 1989). As in Luis Buñuel, scandalous situations and imagery are handled with a casual lightness. *The Skin I Live In* (2011) has a premise suitable for a cheap horror movie, but it is rendered in elegant sets and revels in playfully sinister time shifts. Almodóvar also parodies other movies, as in the delirious silent-film pastiche in *Talk to Her* (2002).

Like Sirk and Fassbinder, Almodóvar decorated his scenes with ripe color design (**Color Plate 25.6**). His visual inventiveness and his warm direction of female performers made him an emblem of the creativity of European cinema. The young rebel became a benevolent elder statesman.

The Return of Art-Cinema Modernism Experimental political modernism did not entirely vanish. Alexander Kluge, after his more straightforward narrative *Strongman Ferdinand* (West Germany, 1975), returned to fragmented historical allegories that inquired into the continuing effects of Nazism and the war (**25.14**). Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet continued to make both static, text-centered films (*Fortini/Cani*, 1976; *Too Early, Too Late*, 1981) and narratively oriented literary adaptations (**25.15**). The Straub-Huillet approach was revived by Pedro Costa, who documented the lives of the Portuguese underclass in the solemn long takes of *Ossos* (1997) and *Colossal Youth* (2006).

More playfully, the Chilean exile Raúl Ruiz created labyrinthine modernist puzzles. *La Vocation suspendu* ("The Suspended Vocation," 1977) purports to present two unfinished films, one intercut with the other, about intrigues within a religious order. *Memory of Appearances: Life Is a Dream* (1987) drops a political agent into a dictatorship where police interrogate suspects behind the screen of a movie theater (**25.16**). Ruiz went on to make

Female Patriot

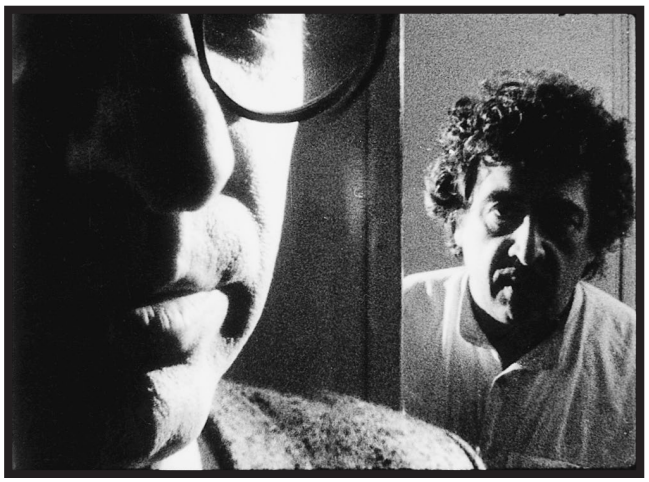
25.14 In Kluge's *Female Patriot* (1979), a persistent researcher, sickle in hand, exhumes the German past.

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

25.13 *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*: comedy on the edge of hysteria.

Class Relations

25.15 Characteristically empty compositions and a range of performance styles in Straub and Huillet's *Class Relations* (1983).



Memory of Appearances: Life Is a Dream

25.16 Ruiz accentuates the cryptic narrative of *Memory of Appearances: Life Is a Dream* with colossal wide-angle shots.

Mon oncle d'Amérique

25.17 The rat race as a fight between executive mice in *Mon oncle d'Amérique.*

Don't Look Now

25.18 The hero's glimpse of his mourning wife and two mysterious women may be a fantasy or a premonition of the future in *Don't Look Now*.

lavish adaptations of literary classics (*Mysteries of Lisbon*, 2010) alongside characteristically puzzling projects (*Night Across the Street*, 2012).

Of all directors in the tradition of political modernism, one gained special prominence in the 1970s and 1980s. The Greek Theo Angelopoulos replaced Michelangelo Antonioni and Miklós Jancsó as the doyen of the long-take approach to film style. As in his *Traveling Players* (1975; see Stylistic Trends of Political Modernism p. 502), he played time-shifting games with history and memory, but his commitment to landscape represented a monumental version of the postwar modernist tradition. His distant camera emphasizes characters moving through vast spaces. The surroundings may shape the action, or might contrast with it—as when a lengthy long shot intensifies a rape in *Landscape in the Mist* (1988; **Color Plate 25.7**).

When Angelopoulos moved toward personal, psychologically driven tales, those remained situated within the social context of a changing Europe, a land of massive immigration and unsettled national identities. *Voyage to Cythera* (1984) shows an elderly Communist exile returned to Greece. In *Landscape in the Mist*, children leave home in search of the father they believe to be in Germany, while *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (1991) centers on a famous novelist who abandons middle-class comforts for the precarious life of a refugee.

Despite the work of the few political modernists and the many feminist filmmakers, most significant European films avoided the direct engagement with political issues that had characterized the period from 1965 to 1975. Established directors continued to produce moderately modernist films for the international market. François Truffaut, for instance, won great success with *La Nuit américaine* (*Day for Night*, 1973) and *The Last Metro* (1980), but the fierce melancholy of *The Green Room* (1978) proved less popular. Alain Resnais became increasingly concerned with exposing the artifices of storytelling, often with a light touch seldom displayed in his official masterpieces *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Muriel*. In *Mon oncle d'Amérique* ("My American Uncle," 1980) human beings' careers illustrate theories of animal behavior (**25.17**). *Providence* (1976), with its scenes halted and revised partway through, lays bare the arbitrariness of fictional plotting.

Several younger directors sustained the new pan-European modernism. In England, Nicholas Roeg, a distinguished cinematographer, made his reputation with the ambiguous, aggressive *Performance* (1970) before creating Resnais-like flashes of subjectivity in *Don't Look Now* (1974; **25.18**) and *Bad Timing: A Sensual Obsession* (1985). From the experimental realm came Peter Greenaway, who moved squarely into the art cinema with *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982), coproduced by Channel 4

and the BFI. A lush seventeenth-century costume drama, *The Draughtsman's Contract* (**Color Plate 25.8**) retains the gamelike labyrinths of Greenaway's early films (see Stories, Dense or Cryptic p. 535) in tracing how an artist discovers the secrets of a wealthy family. Elaborate conceits underlie Greenaway's later work, as when he systematically works numerals into the settings of his dark sex comedy *Drowning by Numbers* (1988) or brings to life the twenty-four texts of *Prospero's Books* (1991), a free adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Less fussily geometrical but more informed by personal feeling were the works of Englishman Terence Davies. Davies's early autobiographical films combine a post-1968 sense of the political implications of personal experience with a facility in art-cinema conventions. Thanks to BFI production initiatives, Davies broke through to international markets with *Distant Voices, Still Lives* (1988). Here the anguish of family life under a psychopathic, abusive father is tempered by the love shared among mother, daughters, and son (**Video 25.1**). The painful material is intensified by a rigorous, rectilinear style akin to Akerman's in *Jeanne Dielman*. Davies dwells on empty hallways and thresholds and treats family encounters and sing-alongs as if they were portrait sittings (**Color Plate 25.9**). In *The Long Day Closes* (1992), a more lush style recreates the bittersweet atmosphere in a family after the father's death. Slow camera movements, dissolves synchronized with lighting changes, and bridging songs slide the action imperceptibly from one time to another and between fantasy and reality.

The use of flashbacks in Davies's films typified a trend that remained robust into the 2010s. Directors often returned to the sort of free-floating time shifts pioneered by Fellini, Buñuel, and others. Lars von Trier's *The Element of Crime* (Denmark, 1983) and *Europa* (aka *Zentropa*, Germany, 1991) sketch ominous landscapes hovering between history and dream. Michael Haneke's *Caché* ("Hidden," 2005) returned to the teasing flashbacks and the ambiguities of point of view characteristic of postwar auteurs. Like Antonioni in *Blow-Up*, Haneke used visual recording (here, a videotape) to create a psychological detective story, but one whose central crime lies buried in France's colonial history.

Other directors drew on popular culture to make the formal games more audience-friendly. Jaco van Dormaël's *Toto le héros* creates a Resnais-like interplay between reality, memory, and fantasy but leavens it with sprightly music and scenes of childhood television viewing. Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run* (Germany, 1998) offers its heroine alternative fates in three parallel universes, all shot in music-video style and set to a techno beat. Cristoffer Boe's *Reconstruction* (Denmark, 2003) updated Resnais for the age of Google Maps, showing variants of a couple's romantic encounter in different areas of a city.

More disturbing fare could cross over to broader audiences. Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos set stories in closed worlds ruled by bizarre rituals and fantasy scenarios. A policeman, a hotel maid, and a clerk restage murders committed by a local serial killer (*Kinetta*, 2005). On a walled-in estate, parents subject their grown children to bloody games of domination (*Dogtooth*, 2009). Four people set up a service selling themselves as stand-ins for recently deceased family members (*Alps*, 2011). Filmed with dry detachment, the role-playing is both comic and cringe-worthy—until things get out of control and violence is unleashed (**Color Plate 25.10**).

Lanthimos' dark satires, echoing late Buñuel and plays of the European Theatre of the Absurd, gave him entry to English-language production. In *The Lobster* (2015), singles check into a resort to find a mate; if they fail, they are turned into animals to be hunted by other guests. Major American and British actors were recruited for *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* (2017), a supernatural tale of human sacrifice, and the more historically realistic comedy of royal intrigue, *The Favourite* (2018). Lanthimos showed that a provocative modernism, presented in a vibrant package, could still attract mainstream viewers.

Less sensational but still challenging was the "Berlin School" of young filmmakers starting careers in the late 1990s. Focusing on urban malaise and the frustrations of drifters and marginal citizens, the films work with popular genres but treat them in a "dedramatized" manner. After making a film about Turkish emigrants, Thomas Arslan offered austere crime films (*Dealer*, 1999; *In the Shadows*, 2010). Angela Schanelec's understated melodramas scrutinized female protagonists. The Berlin School's long, static takes and pictorial minimalism gave them affinities with the trend of "slow cinema" (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around, p. 565).

The most prominent Berlin School filmmaker was Christian Petzold. Petzold passionately admired Hitchcock, Sirk, and horror films. Less detached in his style than Arslan and Schanelec, he was committed to infusing genre pictures with direct emotion. His thriller *Barbara* (2012) builds sympathy for a troubled doctor trying to flee East Germany while loyally serving her patients. *Phoenix* (2014) subjects wild melodramatic devices (mistaken identity, plastic surgery, marital betrayal) to sober acting and lush mise-en-scène, with overtones of classic horror (**25.19**). *Transit* (2018) daringly situates a story of the Nazi Occupation in today's France, making the Gestapo employ CCTV surveillance. Petzold evokes film noir through a voice-over narrator

Phoenix

25.19 Spectral doubles and horror-film imagery: In evoking Germany's postwar traumas, *Phoenix* revives Hollywood's *Invisible Man* of 1933.

Favorites of the Moon

25.20 In a typical distant framing, Iosseliani shows a mysterious transaction: a society woman visits a shop that makes bombs (*Favorites of the Moon*).

and imagery that recalls 1940s Hollywood montage sequences (**Color Plate 25.11**).

Overt political commentary, as in the work of Angelopoulos, lessened over the decades, but most modernist filmmakers believed that their work carried some social criticism: Davies' exposure of domestic violence, Haneke's and Lanthimos' probing of upper-class complacency, the Berlin School's questioning of oppressive social structures. Likewise, the modernist aesthetic was far from finished. Into the 2020s, European directors continued to expand expressive resources that had informed art cinema since the Neorealist era.

Degrees of Separation If one narrative strategy typifies the ambitious European art film of the 2000s, it is the network narrative. Tales of intersecting lives were not new or unique; Altman had explored the format in *Nashville* (1975) and US filmmakers picked up the idea in the 1990s. But the concept of crisscrossing character destinies became quite common in modern European cinema. Sometimes, as in *Happenstance* (France, 2000), it was a matter of creating social comedy through romantic coincidences. A more satiric comedy was possible as well, as shown by Cesc Gay (*In the City*, Spain, 2003).

Other comic dimensions of the European network narrative were revealed by Otar Iosseliani. Emigrating from Soviet Georgia to France, he produced films of wry fantasy. In *Favorites of the Moon* (1984), Russian exiles wander through Paris, caught up in gang wars and love affairs (**25.20**). *Chasing Butterflies* (1992) satirizes efforts to modernize the countryside. *Farewell Home Sweet Home* (1999) is a tangled tale of an aristocratic family that clashes with small-town neighbors.

Iosseliani was influenced by Jacques Tati, not only in his dry physical humor but also in his use of sustained long shots packed with intersecting characters, often silent. "As soon as I see a film that begins with a series of shots and reverse shots, with lots of dialogue and well-known actors, I leave the room immediately. That's not the work of a film artist."[1]

Berlin School director Angela Schanelec pursued the network premise as consistently as Iosseliani did, but in somber, muted dramas. *Passing Summer* (2000) gathers twenty characters during a few months of a young woman's love and personal loss. In *Orly* (2010) the French airport plays host to four interwoven story lines. *Dreamed Path* (2016) hints at time travel: a couple we follow in the first half reappear unchanged as secondary characters in another story thirty years later.

Schanelec's technique was dry and elliptical. Her framings keep character reactions and major events offscreen. Iosseliani favors open long shots as Tati had, but Schanelec often relies on fragmentary, Bressonian closer views. Her long shots can be opaque, further teasing us with questions about how the characters might be connected (**25.21**).

Schanelec's work was typical of the broad tendency of filmmakers to use the network narrative to reflect on chance, fate, and cultural differences. In *Night Shapes* (Germany, 1999), characters from various social classes mingle and diverge during a single night. *Les Passagers* (France, 1999) follows the overlapping destinies of riders on a city tram. *Any Way the Wind Blows* (Belgium, 2003) gradually assembles several people at a party where a mysterious plague may be festering. Sometimes the network connections are accompanied by a juggling of time, as in *InterMission* (the United Kingdom, 2004). On a more massive scale, Lucas Belvaux's *Trilogy* (Belgium, 2002) spreads the network principle across three films,

Marseille

25.21 In *Marseille* (2004), Sophie is questioned by an unseen police officer and assisted by a translator. The staging and framing of this seventy-second shot conceal nearly all story information but her testimony. The next shot, which concludes the scene, shows her breaking into tears in a medium close-up running more than six minutes.

which replay key events from different characters' viewpoints.

The network plot suited international coproductions, which favored actors and locations from different countries; thematically, it could suggest affiliations within the new Europe. Characters hook up between East and West in *Crash Test Dummies* (Germany, 2005), while the meat of a butchered bull brings together people in France and Spain in *Carnages* (2002). At a limit, the characters might simply be linked by current events; *One Day in Europe* (Germany, 2005) presents several stories whose actions are synchronized to a World Cup match. The network narrative became what the flashback-based film had been for the cinema of the 1960s—a primary convention to be explored for its formal and thematic power.

New Women Filmmakers As political commitment turned from revolutionary aspirations to micropolitics (see Political Filmmaking in the Third World p. 475), the 1970s and 1980s saw female filmmakers gain wider recognition. They participated in all the various trends we have been observing. In the popular cinema, the Italian Lina Wertmuller, the German Doris Dörrie, and the French Diane Kurys and Colline Serreau found success with comedies centering on women's friendship and male–female tensions. Women created many network narratives, including *Carnages* (Delphine Gleize, Spain), *Free Radicals* (Barbara Albert, Austria, 2003), *Festival* (Annie Griffin, Scotland, 2005), *Nosotras* (Judith Collel, Spain, 2000), and *Selon Charlie* (Nicole Garcia, France, 2006).

Vagabond

25.22 Directorial detachment in *Vagabond*: while the yuppie researcher complains to his wife, the protagonist Mona collapses in the background.

Other women directors used art-cinema conventions more stringently. Two major examples are Marguerite Duras and Margarethe von Trotta (see Duras, Von Trotta, and the European Art Cinema box). Another is Agnès Varda, who won a major prize at the Venice festival with *Sans toit ni loi* ("Homeless and Lawless," aka *Vagabond*, 1985). Through the countryside tramps an enigmatic young woman, self-destructively bent on living in an unorthodox way. The film obeys the art-cinema norm of flashing back from the investigation of Mona's death to her life in the past. Varda traces Mona's breakdown with a spare, detached camera technique (**25.22**) that suggests both respect for her self-reliance and a sense of a life wasted (**Video 25.2**).

In line with the move toward more accessible filmmaking, Chantal Akerman followed her demanding *Jeanne Dielmann* (1975, see Stylistic Trends of Political Modernism p. 503) with films closer to familiar models. *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna* ("Anna's Appointments," 1978) follows a filmmaker through Europe in a female version of the road movie (**25.23**). *Toute une nuit* ("All Night Long," 1982) is a cross section of a single night in which nearly three dozen couples meet, wait, quarrel, make love, and

Les Rendez-vous d'Anna

25.23 The road movie, filmed in Akerman's dry, rectilinear manner (*Les Rendez-vous d'Anna*).

DURAS, VON TROTTA, AND THE EUROPEAN ART CINEMA

Two women directors exemplify several trends of the 1970s and 1980s. Marguerite Duras, a major novelist, wrote film scripts, most notably for *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959). She began directing in 1966 with *Détruire dit-elle* (*Destroy, She Said*, 1969), followed by *Nathalie Granger* (1973), *Le Camion* ("The Truck," 1977), and *India Song* (1975), among others.

Duras's writing had ties to the avant-garde *Nouveau Roman* ("New Novel"), and she carried literary conceptions of experiment over to her films much as Jean Cocteau and Alain Robbe-Grillet had earlier. Like Germaine Dulac, Maya Deren, and Agnès Varda, though, she also explored a "feminine modernism." Her slow, laconic films, using static images and minimal dialogue, search for a distinctively female use of language. Duras also developed a private world set in Vietnam during the 1930s. In novels, plays, and films she told overlapping stories about colonial diplomats and socialites entangled in love affairs.

India Song remains a landmark of 1970s modernist cinema. It is set mostly in a French embassy in Vietnam, during a long evening party. Couples dance to languid tangos, drifting through the frame or gliding across the huge mirror that dominates the sitting room (**25.24**). But we never see anyone speaking. Anonymous voices seem to be commenting on the image, even though the voices are in the present and the action occurs in the past. Moreover, most of the dramatic action—seduction, betrayal, and suicide—takes place offscreen or in the mirror.

India Song is an experiment in sustained tempo: Duras timed every gesture and camera movement with a stopwatch. We cannot be sure whether the action we see actually took place or is a kind of imaginary staging of the characters' relations. Murmurs on the soundtrack suggest that the party is crowded, but the static long shots show only the main characters. The film pulls the spectator into a hypnotic reverie while also meditating upon the insular routines of colonialist life.

India Song

25.24 The parlor mirror in *India Song*: class relations doubled.

Margarethe von Trotta belonged to a younger generation. Born in 1942, she worked as an actress in several Young German films. She married Volker Schlöndorff in 1971 and collaborated with him on several films. The popular success of their codirected effort, *The Lost Honor of Katherina Blum* (1975), enabled von Trotta to direct several films herself, notably *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* (1977), *The German Sisters* (1981), *Rosa Luxembourg* (1986), and *Three Sisters* (1988). To the international tradition of quality, she contributed an epic survey of postwar German life in *The Promise* (1995) and a biography of a German philosopher in *Hannah Arendt* (2012).

Not as experimental as Duras, von Trotta exploits more accessible conventions of the art cinema in order to examine women's problems. Her earliest works show

part (**Color Plate 25.12**). *The Golden 80s* (aka *Window Shopping*, 1983) offers a high-gloss musical in the Demy manner, with romantic intrigues crisscrossing a shopping mall, bubbly song numbers, and bitter reflections on sexual stratagems. *Nuit et jour* ("Night and Day," 1991) is something of a feminist rethinking of the Nouvelle Vague, as if the love triangle of *Jules and Jim* were told from the woman's point of view. In all these, the fragmented narrative of the postwar art cinema enables Akerman to dwell on casual encounters and accidental epiphanies, as well as her consistent interest in women's work and their desire for love and physical pleasure.

Women directors created a virtual wing of the New German Cinema, thanks partly to the ambitious funding programs launched by television and government agencies. Von Trotta was only the most visible representative of a boom in films that used art-cinema strategies to investigate women's issues. For example, Helke Sander was a student activist in 1968 and a cofounder of the German women's liberation movement. After several short films linked to the women's movement, Sander made *The All-Around Reduced Personality: Redupers* (1978), the story of a photographer who shows unofficial images of West Berlin and encounters opposition to publishing them.

women breaking out of their domestic roles and becoming scandalous public figures: Katherina Blum aids a terrorist on the run; Christa Klages becomes a bank robber. Von Trotta's later films concentrate on the conflicting pulls of work roles, family ties, and sexual love. She is keenly interested in the ways in which mothers, daughters, and sisters, sharing key moments of family history, slip into situations in which they exercise power over one another.

Sisters, or the Balance of Happiness (1979), for example, contrasts two women. The crisp, efficient Maria is an executive secretary geared to career advancement. Her younger sister Anna, halfheartedly pursuing a degree in biology, lives in her imagination, lingering over memories of childhood. Anna commits suicide, partly because of Maria's demand that she succeed. Maria responds by finding a substitute sister, a typist whom she tries to mold into a professional. Eventually, however, Maria realizes that she has been too rigid: "I will attempt to dream in the course of my life. I will endeavor to be Maria and Anna."

Fassbinder would have turned *Sisters* into a sinister melodrama of domination, but von Trotta refuses to portray Maria as a monster. Von Trotta balances point of view to create a gradual shift of sympathies. At first, the audience enters Anna's memories and reveries (**25.25**) and stays at a distance from Maria. After Anna's suicide, von Trotta takes us into Maria's guilt-ridden mind. At the end, the characteristic art-cinema blend of memories, fantasies, and ambiguous images suggests that Maria envisions the mysterious forest that had formed part of Anna's daydreams. This is "the balance of happiness."

The two directors' uses of mirrors neatly encapsulate the differences in their approaches. The luxurious geometry of *India Song*'s parlor illustrates Duras's emphasis on form, with the mirror sometimes resembling a window to another realm. Duras's experimental impulses led her into esoteric explorations of sound and image relations. *Son nom de Venise dans Calcutta désert* ("Her Name, Venice, in the Desert of Calcutta," 1976) contains *India Song*'s entire soundtrack but shows completely different shots of the embassy, all empty of human presence. Thirty of the forty-five minutes of *L'Homme atlantique* ("The Atlantic Man," 1981) consist of a black screen.

Sisters, or the Balance of Happiness

25.25 Mirrors define Anna's fantasy world in *Sisters, or the Balance of Happiness*. Here, she recalls herself and Maria putting on lipstick as children.

By contrast, von Trotta's mirrors link and contrast characters, intensifying story issues. "If there is such a thing at all as a female form of aesthetics in film, it lies for me in the choice of themes, in the attentiveness as well, the respect, the sensitivity, the care, with which we approach the people we're presenting."[2] Rarefied formal experiment of the Duras sort would prove increasingly uncommon as filmmakers such as von Trotta turned toward more accessible subjects and style.

The 1990s and 2000s proved especially fruitful. Women created many network narratives, including *Carnages* (Delphine Gleize, Spain), *Free Radicals* (Barbara Albert, Austria, 2003), *Festival* (Annie Griffin, Scotland, 2005), *Nosostras* (Judith Collel, Spain, 2000), and *Selon Charlie* (Nicole Garcia, France, 2006). In Scotland, Lynne Ramsay revived kitchen-sink realism in *Ratcatcher* (1999) and *Morvern Callar* (2002) before moving to international productions *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2011) and *You Were Never Really Here* (2017). The British filmmaker Joanna Hogg found acclaim with *Unrelated* (2008), *The Souvenir* (2019), and other tense, minimally shot relationship dramas.

France was probably the country most hospitable to women directors. Claire Denis, who tackled brother–sister relations in *Nénette et Boni* (1996), turned her attention to masculine fantasies of heroism in the sumptuous *Beau Travail* ("Nice Work," 1999; **Color Plate 25.13**) and to the legacy of French colonialism in Africa (*White Material*, 2009). Working in a variety of genres, Denis became one of the most important French directors. Catherine Breillat offered audacious studies of female desire in *Romance* (1999) and *Fat Girl* (2001). The younger director Céline Sciamma specialized in films about teenage girls exploring their developing identities (*Tomboy*, 2011; *Girlhood*, 2014).

Her *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* (2019), centered on a love affair between a wealthy young woman and her painting teacher, brought Sciamma's concern with lesbian attraction to the genre of the historical film.

In 1970, very few female directors could be found in Western Europe. By 2017, about 20 percent of feature releases were by women. This was still a small proportion, but compared to other regions of the world it was remarkable.

Just as important, the 2000s saw women move to powerful positions in media firms. Throughout the continent, female producers and executives were leading festivals, talent agencies, and production companies. Women headed StudioCanal, the British Association of Film and Television Arts, and branches of Apple TV+ and Amazon programming. This growth in participation was indebted to decades of effort in establishing women creators as essential to European film culture.

The Arresting Image

From the 1970s to the present, many European filmmakers sought to give their films a captivating surface. The New Hollywood's hyperkinetic display of chases, explosions, and special effects was paralleled by European directors' efforts to absorb the spectator in a rapt contemplation of a beautiful or startling image.

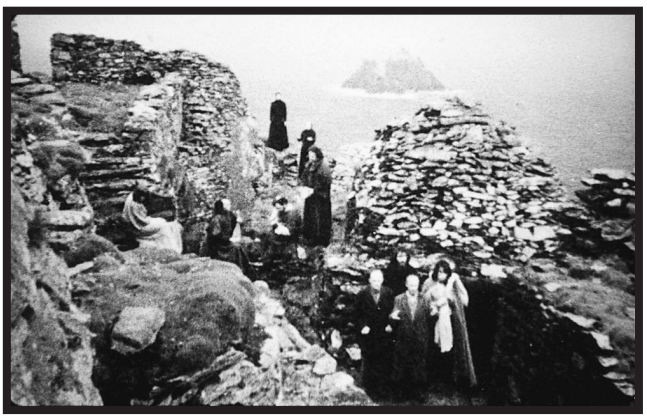
Herzog, Wenders, and Sensibilist Cinema Two Munich-based directors manifested this pictorialism in the early 1970s: Werner Herzog and Wim Wenders. Trusting to the beauty of the image and the sensitivity of the viewer, they turned away from the political concerns of other New German filmmakers. Their introspective "sensibilist" styles were in tune with a "new inwardness" trend in German literature of the period.

Herzog made his reputation with a string of cryptic dramas: *Signs of Life* (1968), *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970), *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), *Every Man for Himself and God Against All* (aka *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*) (1975), and *Heart of Glass* (1976). All flaunt Herzog's highly romantic sensibility. He fastens on the heroic achiever (the conquistador Aguirre out to rule a continent; **25.26**, **Video 26.3**), the marginal and innocent (dwarfs, the feral child Kaspar Hauser), and the mystic (the entire community in *Heart of Glass*).

Herzog sought to capture the immediacy of experience, a purity of perception unhampered by language. He often celebrated the encounter of people with the sheer physicality of the world. In *Land of Silence and Darkness* (1971), blind and deaf people visit a cactus farm and take their first airplane trip. Film images, Herzog believed,

Aguirre, the Wrath of God

25.26 *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*: the conquistador, holding his dead daughter, still vows to find the seven cities of gold.



Heart of Glass

25.27 The final images of *Heart of Glass* illustrate a character's parable about men who set out for the edge of the world.

should return people to the world as it is, but as we seldom see it. "That's why I want to make films.... I want to show things that are inexplicable somehow."[3]

To increase this sense of mystery, Herzog conjured up bizarre images, often suspending the narrative. The camera observes impassively as an empty car circles a barnyard while a little man laughs maniacally. Conquistadors floating through the Peruvian jungle stare at a ship nestled in a treetop. A door about to close mysteriously stops, and this tiny event becomes an occasion for contemplation.

Herzog's images open onto the infinite through visions of water, mists, and skies (**25.27**). In the opening of *Heart of Glass*, clouds flow like boiling rivers through mountain valleys. Periodically, Aguirre contemplates the hypnotic pulsations of the turbulent Amazon. The deserts of *Fata Morgana* (1970) dissolve into teeming speckles of film grain, flickers akin to those interrupt *Kaspar Hauser* and invite us to share the protagonist's vision.

Herzog declared himself the heir of F. W. Murnau; he made a new version of *Nosferatu* (1978), and he recaptured Expressionist acting style by hypnotizing the cast of *Heart of Glass*. His allegiance to the silent cinema was evident in his belief that sheerly striking images could express mystical truths beyond language. But the evocative power of his work also depended on the throbbing scores supplied by the art-rock group Popol Vuh. The loosening of cause-and-effect characteristic of the art cinema enabled Herzog to dedicate himself to discovering the pure, timeless image.

Wim Wenders began with similar anti-narrative impulses, making a series of minimalist shorts during the late 1960s. When Wenders turned to features, his sensibilist side found expression in loose journey narratives that halted for contemplation of locales and objects. Strongly influenced by American culture, he found as much sensuous pleasure in pinball, rock and roll, and Hollywood movies as Herzog found in the vastness of nature. Wenders praised the moments in films that are "so unexpectedly lucid, so overwhelmingly concrete, that you hold your breath or sit up or put your hand to your mouth."[4]

In *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* (1971), a young man drifts about, moves in with a woman, murders her, drifts some more, and waits for the police to find him. The plot, based on a novel by the new-inwardness writer Peter Handke, crumbles into a series of "overwhelmingly concrete" moments, as when a cigarette tossed from a bus showers sparks in the road (**Color Plate 25.14**). Similarly, in Wenders's "road" trilogy—*Alice in the Cities* (1973), *The Wrong Move* (1974), and *In the Course of Time* (aka *Kings of the Road*, 1976)—the wanderings of displaced characters are punctuated by lengthy landscape shots, silences, and images that invite intense study. Not surprisingly, Wenders declared Yasujiro Ozu his favorite director, making a documentary in homage to him (*Tokyo-Ga*, 1985).

"I totally reject stories," Wenders wrote in 1982, "because for me they only bring out lies, nothing but lies, and the biggest lie is that they show coherence where there is none. Then again, our need for these lies is so consuming that it's completely pointless to fight them and to put together a sequence of images without a story—without the lie of a story. Stories are impossible, but it's impossible to live without them."[5] Wenders's films enact an ongoing struggle between the demand for narrative and a search for instantaneous visual revelation.

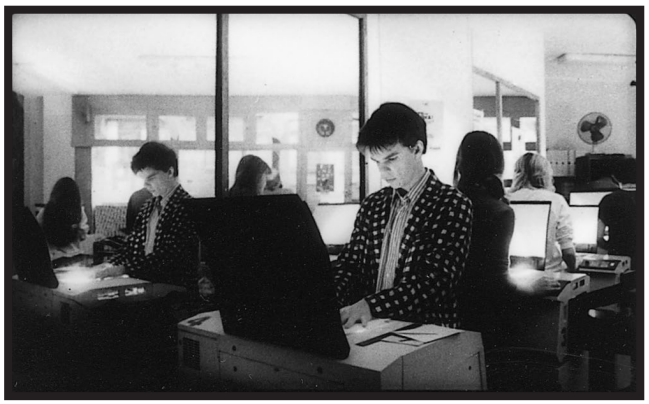
Wenders's *Himmel über Berlin* ("Heavens over Berlin," aka *Wings of Desire*, 1987) again searches for the overwhelmingly concrete—this time by means of the angel Damiel, who is captivated by the transient beauty of the world. He decides to join the human race; like Dorothy entering Oz, he falls into a world of color (**Color Plate 25.15**). He eventually unites with a trapeze artist, while his fellow angel must watch from the celestial, black-and-white world. Yet this initiation into the everyday is a fall into narrative and history, emblematically represented by Homer, the elderly storyteller who links Berlin to its past. *Wings of Desire* is dedicated to "all the old angels, especially Yasujiro [Ozu], François [Truffaut], and Andrei [Tarkovsky]"—all directors who reconciled narrative significance with pictorial beauty.

France: The Cinéma du Look In France, the new pictorialism surfaced in an uncharacteristic film by Eric Rohmer, *Perceval le gallois* (1978; **25.28**). It emerged in a glossier form in André Téchiné's *Barocco* (1976), a pastiche of film noir. Jacques Demy's "musical tragedy" *Un Chambre en ville* ("A Room in Town," 1982) presents saturated colors and busy wallpaper patterns that frame a grim story of lovers' betrayal and a workers' strike (**Color Plate 25.16**).

In the early 1980s, a younger generation of French filmmakers began to steer this image-consciousness in fresh directions. They turned away from the political modernism of the post-1968 era and the grubby realism of Jean Eustache and Maurice Pialat toward a fast-moving highly artificial cinema. They drew inspiration from Hollywood (especially Coppola's *One from the Heart* and *Rumble Fish*), late Fassbinder, television commercials, music videos, and fashion photography. Examples of the new French trend are Jean-Jacques Beineix's *Diva* (1982), *Moon in the Gutter* (1983), *37° 2 le matin* (aka *Betty Blue*, 1985), and *IP5* (1992); Luc Besson's *Subway* (1985), *Big Blue* (1988), and *Nikita*; and Leos Carax's *Boy Meets Girl* (1984), *Mauvais sang* ("Bad Blood," aka *The Night Is Young*, 1986), and *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* ("The Lovers of the Pont-Neuf," 1992).

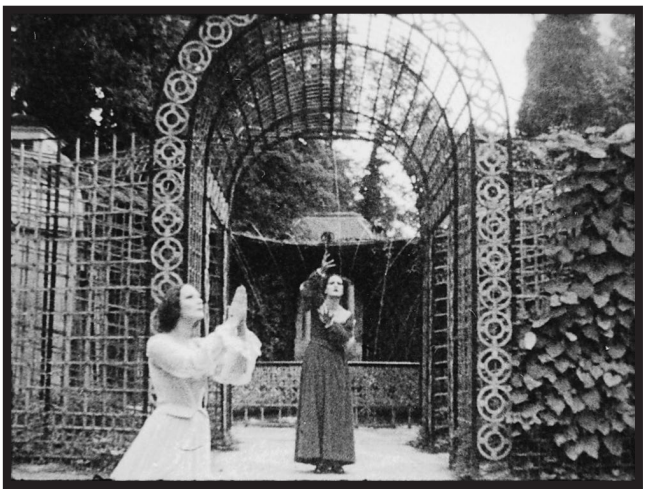
Perceval le gallois

25.28 The artificial image in Rohmer's *Perceval le gallois*.



Boy Meets Girl

25.29 A photocopy store becomes a dizzying play of shadows, moving light, and reflections (*Boy Meets Girl*).



Death of Maria Malibran

25.30 Divas freeze into histrionic poses (*Death of Maria Malibran*, 1971).

Parisian critics called this the *cinéma du look*. The films decorate fairly orthodox plotlines with chic fashion, high-tech gadgetry, and conventions drawn from advertising photography and television commercials. The directors fill the shots with crisp edges and stark blocks of color; mirrors and polished metal create dazzling reflections (**25.29**). The slick images of Beineix and Besson evoke publicity and video style, as well as *Blade Runner* and *Flashdance*. Carax, the most resourceful of the group, creates sensuous imagery through chiaroscuro lighting, unusual framings, and unexpected choices of focus (**Color Plate 25.17**). Several critics diagnosed this trend as a postmodern style that borrowed from mass-culture design in order to create an aesthetic of surfaces. In a broader perspective, the cinéma du look was a mannerist, youth-oriented version of that tendency toward startling beauty seen in more enigmatic form in Herzog and Wenders.

Theater and Painting: Godard and Others The fascination with images was shared by German directors outside the sensibilist trend. For some, theater provided another way to return to the image and spectacle. Werner Schroeter, a distinguished opera director, created several stylized, baroque films (**25.30**). Hans-Jürgen Syberberg followed *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (see Political Modernism: Kluge, Syberberg, and Straub/Huillet p. 508) with *Parsifal* (1982), an adaptation of Richard Wagner's music drama as a colossal allegory of German history and myth (**Color Plate 25.18**).

Further manifestations of the new pictorialism came from the Portuguese director Manoel de Oliveira. After his 1931 city symphony *Douro, Faina Fluvial* (see Experimental Narratives and Lyrical and Abstract Films p. 278), he produced little until *Act of Spring* (1963), a quasi-documentary about a village reenactment of Christ's passion. Oliveira went on to make a string of films whose visual beauty often arose from a transformation of theatrical traditions. His most ambitious was *The Satin Slipper* (1985), a seven-hour adaptation of a mystical French play.

Oliveira relied on norms of art-cinema narration. *Act of Spring* displays the act of filming according to then-current conventions of reflexivity and cinéma vérité. Once the passion play begins, however, he treats it as a self-contained ritual, eliminating the audience and dwelling on the tensions between theatrical conventions and the open-air space, where stylized costumes and props stand in sunlight and landscape (**Color Plate 25.19**). Reflexivity reappears in *The Satin Slipper* (1985), which begins in an actual theater, incorporates film clips projected onstage, and ends in a movie studio.

Throughout his career (he was directing until age 104), Oliveira adapted plays written by himself or other Portuguese dramatists. Even his films not drawn from the stage display a sumptuous mise-en-scène, often recalling theater conventions through tableau compositions and direct address to the camera (**25.31**). A similar theatricality emerged in the whimsical works of João César Monteiro, another Portuguese filmmaker. Exploiting a solemn long-take style, Monteiro's images are often more eccentric and disquieting than Oliveira's (**25.32**).

For other directors fascinated by the artificial image, theater did not provide as much inspiration as painting did. Derek Jarman's first mainstream feature, *Caravaggio* (1986), not only portrays the master creating his paintings (**Color Plate 25.20**) but also employs a painterly style in the dramatic scenes. In Raúl Ruiz's *Hypothèse du tableau volé* ("Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting," 1978), the camera wends its way around figures frozen in place and representing missing paintings by an obscure artist. Jacques Rivette's *La Belle noiseuse* ("The Beautiful Flirt," 1991) and Victor Erice's *The Quince Tree Sun* (1992) center on

In Eccentricities of a Blonde-Haired Girl

25.31 In *Eccentricities of a Blonde-Haired Girl* (2009), the man tells his story of doomed love. But the woman beside him shares her reactions with the camera, replying to him while looking at us, as if we were a theater audience.

Silvestre

25.32 *Sylvestre* (1981): a medieval drama mixes realistic locations with stylized theatrical sets.

painters, and in each the plot is secondary to quiet observation of the meticulous process by which an image is born.

Ulrike Ottinger, a West German photographer and graphic artist, was a central participant in the new pictorialism. Her *Ticket of No Return* (1979) portrays a rich woman alcoholic on a binge through Berlin, dogged by three sociologists who interject lectures on the dangers of drink. The unrealistic staging is interrupted by several of the woman's daydreams. *Freak Orlando* (1981) confronts Virginia Woolf's dual-gendered time traveler Orlando with "freaks" at various points in history. Ottinger's outlandish costumes intensify the fantasy (**Color Plate 25.21**).

Jean-Luc Godard also took inspiration from painting. His video work had concentrated on the relations among images, dialogues, and written texts, but when he returned to cinema he was calling himself a painter who happened to work in film. However much Wenders believed he gave up the story for the sake of the singular image, Godard went much further. *Passion* (1982), one of the most pictorially rich films of his career, centers on a film director who replicates famous paintings on video. Godard's camera glides over groups of static actors, making a two-dimensional image voluminous, as if the cinema had the power to breathe life into familiar masterpieces (**Color Plate 25.22**).

Godard's films of the following years—*First Name Carmen* (1983), *Hail Mary* (1985), *Détective* (1985), *King Lear* (1987), *Soigne ta droite* ("Keep Up Your Right," 1987), *Nouvelle Vague* (1990)—while not relaxing his usual demands on the viewer, suggest a new serenity. There is a lyrical treatment of foliage, water, and sunlight. Rejecting his frontal, posterlike shots of the late 1960s, Godard builds scenes out of oblique, close views of the human body and its surroundings. He uses available light, without fill, to create rich shadow areas. His angles split the scene into planes of sharp detail and out-of-focus action (**Color Plate 25.23**).

Godard even tries to find beauty in devastation. *In Praise of Love* (2001) revives memories of the Holocaust, while *Notre Musique* (2004) examines war-torn former Yugoslavia. Through stock footage or the pulverized imagery of video, Godard finds moments of piercing pictorial beauty. The "painterly" Godard film has a calm radiance that softens the abrasiveness of the subject and the perplexities of the story. In his characteristically radical way, he shows the rewards of a return to the arresting image.

The tendency toward the ravishing image emerged on many fronts, with Lars von Trier's *The Element of Crime* yielding a trancelike view of a frightening netherworld (**Color Plate 25.24**) and Claire Denis's *Beau Travail* presenting sunbaked images of Foreign Legionnaires tidily ironing their uniforms (Color Plate 25.10). In *Delicatessen* (1991) and *The City of Lost Children* (1995), Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro created comic-book grotesquerie, half Terry Gilliam, half Tim Burton (**25.33**). Jeunet found solo success with the zany *Amélie*, which softened and

The City of Lost Children

25.33 Wide-angle deformations in *The City of Lost Children*.

ART CINEMA: SLOWING DOWN AND JUMPING AROUND

During the 2000s, two extreme stylistic tendencies caught critics' attention. On the one side, story pace slackened. The focus on the arresting image led some filmmakers to unfold their scenes with unusual deliberation. At the other extreme was a nervous, skittery style that sought to engage viewers viscerally.

What some critics were calling "slow cinema" might better have been called slow*er* cinema. Since World War II, many directors had employed long takes, intervals of silence or "dead time," and loosening of narrative action (see Neorealist Form and Style p. 319). Art films had long been criticized as ponderous, and minimalist filmmakers of the 1970s had stretched the viewer's patience even more (see Stylistic Trends of Political Modernism p. 500). Now younger directors were pushing these tendencies further, creating static, severe films that seemed opposed to pleasurable cinematic storytelling.

Landscapes and empty interiors prevailed over drama, and characters were impassive and seldom revealed their inner lives. The "behaviorism" initiated by Neorealism seemed to have come to a kind of limit in a film like *Colossal Youth* (2006), in which an unmoving camera records semi-fictionalized lives of the underclass (**25.34**).

This trend had sources in the postwar films of Dreyer, particularly *Gertrud* (1965; see Scandinavian Revival p. 336), and the work of Antonioni, Bresson, Tarkovsky, Warhol, and Straub and Huillet. The German Sensibilists, seeking to transfix the viewer with a rapturous image, were in a similar vein. Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman*, a prototype of minimalism, was influenced by Structural Film (see Structural Film and After p. 526). By the early 2000s, many filmmakers around the world had decided to decelerate plot pace and emphasize static, barely changing images.

A shot might run for minutes. Instead of the virtuoso camera movements to be found in Hollywood long takes, filmmakers anchored the camera, the better to let the action unfold gradually, what Tarkovsky called "sculpting in time." In Albert Serra's *Birdsong* (2008), the story of the birth of Jesus is given an austerity through nearly motionless takes, with some shots accentuating humor and others depicting spiritual devotion (**25.35**).

The prolonged shot provokes the viewer to register aspects of setting and performance that would normally go unnoticed. Tiny gestures leap to our eye when everything else remains unchanging (**25.36**). Directors began to realize that whole films could be built out of scenes with such fine-grained activity.

Colossal Youth

25.34 *Colossal Youth*: while the TV runs, Vanda tells Ventura about her drug addiction and the traumatic birth of her daughter. No cuts to closer views break up the ten-minute shot, and the distant, unbalanced composition further downplays the drama.

Birdsong

25.35 The three wise men lie prostrate in a four-minute static shot, so that the only motion we see is that of the baby Jesus on Mary's lap (*Birdsong*).

The Turin Horse

25.36 In *The Turin Horse* (Béla Tarr, 2012), the unmoving camera forces us to notice the different ways father and daughter eat their meager meal of boiled potatoes.

A very different creative option was gaining strength over the same years. After Direct Cinema documentary had made the camera mobile, some mainstream filmmakers employed handheld shooting for fiction films. Early examples were *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and the work of John Cassavetes. (Avant-garde filmmakers like Stan Brakhage had done the same a decade before.) The Steadicam (see New Production and Exhibition Techniques p. 457) and portable video made shooting loose and informal to an even greater degree.

The result was a style relying on what was called the "free camera." Instead of fixed shots that pinned actors to setting, the framing seems spontaneously to follow them, shifting constantly as the scene develops. Instead of precise compositions, the image is sketchy, perhaps a little wobbly, always subject to revision. The camera might probe the situation like a curious bystander (**25.37–25.40**). Single-take features such as *Victoria* (Germany, 2015) carry this onlooker principle to the limit.

The free-camera approach became common in low-budget films of the 1990s as well as TV series such as *Homicide: Life on the Streets* and films of the Dogme 95 movement (see Back to Basics: Dogme 95 p. 687). In the new century, it became a favored option around the world, associated with the Dardennes and other naturalist directors. Hollywood's embrace of more aggressive approaches to continuity (see Intensified Continuity: A Style for the Video Age p. 660) absorbed the free-camera technique as well.

The free camera fostered speed and efficiency in production, and audiences came to accept it. But it could seem distracting. The Danish comedy *Clash of Egos* (2008) centers on an ordinary viewer given a chance to direct a movie. Having had his fill of bumpy footage, he insists that the shots be steady. The cinematographer protests: "I haven't put the camera on a tripod since film school."

Gomorrah

25.37 *Gomorrah*: the handheld camera follows drug traffickers going to meet young men offering a deal.

"Slower cinema" was associated with festivals and art houses, but the free camera was used in both art films and mass-market ones. As that style became a new norm, adherents of the minimalist model may have felt justified in embracing what they considered a more contemplative and deeply engaging technique.

Gomorrah

25.38 Catching up, the camera eases into their conversation, framing one of the youths. As in a Wiseman documentary, the shot frames who is speaking at the moment.

Gomorrah

25.39 Instead of cutting to a reaction shot, the camera pans to capture the response of the dealer. The framing then shifts slightly to reveal the dealer's partner watching.

Gomorrah

25.40 The dealer and the young men move on to consummate the deal, with the camera following at a distance, as if it were an onlooker trying to catch up.

brightened the wide-angle look, as suited a nonsense comedy recalling René Clair (**Color Plate 25.25**). More monumental, darkly comic imagery came from Sweden's Roy Andersson. In *Songs from the Second Floor* (2000) and *You, the Living* (2007), city life grinds away in gray, cavernous spaces, sparsely populated by skeletal or obese figures (**Color Plate 25.26**).

Theatrical and painterly impulses were combined in the work of Eugène Green, an American working in France. Before an unmoving camera, his characters stand stiffly, as if posing for a portrait, and they speak directly to the camera, as if on stage (**Color Plate 25.27**). The apparently naive technique projects a poetic sincerity, and it suits the fairy-tale plotting of *Le Monde vivant* ("The Living World," 2003) and *Le Pont des arts* (2004).

Perhaps in response to the self-conscious beauty of such films, other directors assaulted the viewer with shocking material. French filmmakers began conjuring up sexual imagery reminiscent of hard-core pornography, as in Catherine Breillat's *Romance*, Bruno Dumont's *La vie de Jésus* (1997), and Patrice Chéreau's *Intimacy* (2001). Outside France, the same explicitness turned up in Lukas Moodysson's *A Hole in My Heart* (Sweden, 2004) and Michael Winterbottom's *9 Songs* (the United Kingdom, 2004). At times, the new eroticism was laced with brutal violence. Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Thi's *Baise-moi* (2000) showed two women who embark on a road trip mixing sex with murder. Gaspar Noë's *Seul Contre Tous* (*I Stand Alone*, 1999) was no less fervid in its portrayal of a sociopathic butcher, and his follow-up *Irreversible* (2002) became notorious for its harrowing rape scene.

The Austrian Michael Haneke typified the move toward a cinema that frankly threatens its audience. In calm and clinical detail, he follows his people beyond the limit of everyday behavior. His brutal realism coexists with an ominous formal precision, as if only a cold stare could do justice to the horrors of modern social relations.

Haneke found his distinctive tone with *The Seventh Continent* (1989), a dispassionate portrayal of a family's collective suicide. *Benny's Video* (1992) shows a rich schoolboy seducing and murdering a classmate, everything recorded on tape. In *La Pianiste* (*The Piano Player*, 2001), a middle-aged piano teacher becomes fascinated by one of her pupils, whom she entices into a sadomasochistic relationship. *Code Inconnu* ("Code Unknown," 2000) plays a harsh variant on the network narrative. Several Parisians—an aspiring actress, an African family—are connected to the Bosnian war through a gesture of casual cruelty (**25.41**). Using a flashback structure, *Amour* (2012) revisits domestic homicide, now as an act of love. Haneke's laconic, unsentimental style presents death as, for once, a release rather than a violation.

Code Inconnu

25.41 In *Code Inconnu*, the selfish French boy throws a crumpled sack into the lap of a Romany beggar woman. The gesture starts to spin a web of painful events.

EASTERN EUROPE AND THE USSR

Eastern Europe: From Reform to Revolution

"It is time to relegate to the archives the postulates of the cold war. . . . Any interference in internal affairs and any attempts to restrict the sovereignty of states—either friends and allies or anyone else—are inadmissible."[6] These remarks, made by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in June 1989, went beyond the official lie that the USSR satellites were independent. Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness) policy included a greater degree of self-determination for the Eastern European countries.

In the months before and after Gorbachev's speech, these countries astonished the world by taking down their governments. Throughout 1989, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania cast out their Communist leaders and demanded democracy and economic reform along capitalist lines. Joyous crowds, gathering from all over Europe, tore down the Berlin Wall. Less than two years later, an aborted coup against Gorbachev triggered the collapse of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union itself.

Velvet Revolutions and National Cinemas Almost no one predicted the abrupt death of Eastern European Communism. The 1968 Prague Spring had been aborted by an invasion of Soviet troops (see The Prague Spring and Its Aftermath p. 490), and all hopes of democracy seemed stilled. Poland, Hungary, and some other Eastern countries pacified their citizens with economic reforms and

boosts in living standards that suggested that "socialist consumerism" had finally arrived. Yet the prosperity of Eastern Europe was artificial, sustained by price controls. New forces for change—labor unions, nationalist groups, and even religious bodies—chipped away at the Communist regimes.

The most decisive events took place in Poland. During 1976 and 1977, the government's attempt to raise prices was met by a rash of strikes. In 1980, more strikes erupted when thousands of workers occupied the shipyards of Gdansk. Lech Wałęsa and other workers founded a new union: Solidarity. Solidarity rapidly became a kind of popular front, claiming that it was working to turn Poland into a "self-governing republic." The regime responded by outlawing Solidarity and declaring martial law. Leaders of Solidarity were arrested, and the organization went underground.

When Gorbachev announced in 1985 that the Russian government would not send troops into a satellite nation, the Polish government began negotiations with Solidarity. In the open elections of 1989, Solidarity won a stunning victory over Communist incumbents and Wałęsa became president of the new Poland.

Popular movements toward liberalization emerged in Hungary and Czechoslovakia as well. The failures of Eastern Europe's planned economies made people eager to move toward democracy, market economies, and access to agricultural produce, modern housing, and up-to-date consumer goods. The "velvet revolutions" of 1989 were partly responses to the inability of Communism to deliver social services and to guarantee citizens a modern lifestyle.

At first, political freedom hurt film production. East European cinema was battered by the economic crises and social upheavals of the late 1980s. In East Germany, for example, the end of the Communist regime and the reunification with West Germany left old-line filmmakers stranded. German films claimed only 10 percent of the national box office. In Yugoslavia, an ethnic war started in 1991 and destroyed civil society. The war ground to a close at the end of the century, but with the creation of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and other states, Yugoslavian cinema was ended. Its wilder traditions were recalled in Emir Kusturica's Felliniesque black comedy *Underground* (1995), which traces the history of Yugoslavia from 1941 to the civil war.

After 1989: The Threat of Hollywood Throughout post-1989 Eastern Europe, the centralized government production systems were replaced by private film companies that welcomed Western money. In most countries, state censorship was abolished.

The new conditions created a fresh barrage of difficulties. Under Communist regimes, ticket prices had been low (usually less than a dollar), but open-market conditions forced prices up, which drove audiences away. Theaters were shabby, but without state subsidy there was no money for renovations. Home video, offering unrestrained (often pirated) access to popular Western films, further cut theater attendance.

Worst of all, post-1989 freedom put filmmakers head to head with Hollywood. The results were predictable. American films flooded the market much as they had deluged Western Europe after World War II. In 1991, 95 percent of the films playing in Poland were from US companies, while Czech films attracted less than one-fourth of domestic box-office revenues. In the same year, the audience for Hungarian films was only one-seventh of what it had been two years before. The local product played in small art theaters and barely broke even.

Eastern European governments sought to imitate Western Europe by offering loans, subsidies, and prizes, but funds remained scanty. With countries struggling to heal fractured economies and inflation running high, art cinema could no longer expect much help. Filmmakers had little choice but to pursue international audiences.

After dissolving the Warsaw Pact in 1991, former Soviet satellites sought to join the European Community. In 2004, most of the major countries were admitted, and some filmmakers began to receive funds from EU agencies and television channels. In addition, local producers began reaping the benefits of coproductions with richer countries to the west. The large-scale studio facilities left over from Communist days proved attractive to foreign producers, and low wages, favorable exchange rates, and tax incentives brought in runaway productions. Facilities in Prague, Bucharest, and Budapest competed for foreign projects.

Politically, in many of these countries the 1989 burst of liberalization was followed by a counterreaction. In the 2010s, populist right-wing regimes came to power in several governments. Film production remained at moderate levels, sometimes assisted by EU and coproduction funding, and most governments allocated subsidies and tax incentives to help the industry. Attendance increased overall, thanks partly to modern multiplexes. In Poland and the Czech Republic, local films gained sizable market share.

Still, filmmakers struggled to make popular films, let alone festival successes and exportable releases. The key countries of Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary

illustrate how Eastern European film moved from the stagnant years of the mid-1970s to the problems and achievements of the 2010s.

Czech Republic After the Prague Spring of 1968, the government crackdown was severe. The government tightened control over film units, where byzantine bureaucracies and corps of "literary advisers" steered production away from political subjects and toward popular entertainment. Many directors emigrated.

Of the New Wave directors who stayed, Jirí Menzel did not make a film until 1976, and then began turning out characteristically bittersweet comedies such as *My Sweet Little Village* (1986). Vera Chytilová, after campaigning for years against the sexism of the regime's film policy (see The Prague Spring and Its Aftermath p. 490), returned to directing with *The Apple Game* (1976), a farce about sexual relations that earned official disapproval but was marketed abroad. She followed this with films that mixed commercial narrative forms with eroticism and social satire.

After the 1989 revolts, major banned films came off the shelf. Audiences around the world saw what the censors had forbidden, and the vivacity of the Prague Spring was recaptured. Menzel's *Larks on a String* (1969; see The Prague Spring and Its Aftermath p. 490), taken out of the vaults, won the main prize at the Berlin Film Festival twenty years after it was finished.

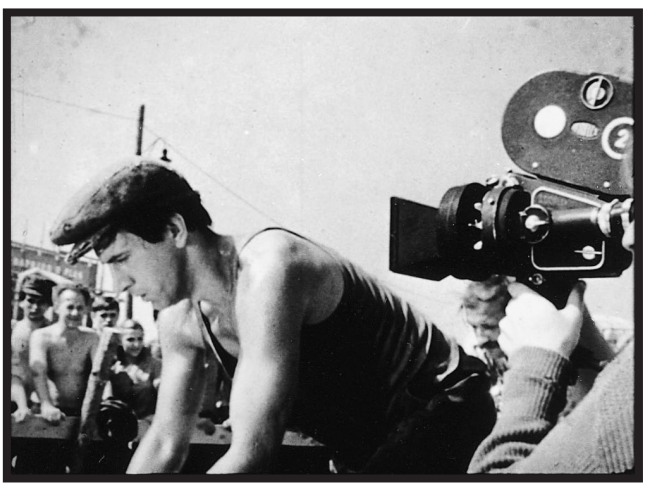
In 1993, the country split peacefully, creating the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Slovakia made few films until the 2010s, when some titles attracted festival attention. After a period of readjustment, the Czech industry regained its strength, putting out a dozen or two films each year. Menzel, Jan Švankmajer, and other senior directors mounted new projects. Just as important, Prague held Barrandov Studio, the major Eastern Europe production facility. It attracted many top overseas projects, including *Casino Royale* (2006), *Mission Impossible–Ghost Protocol* (2011), and the dystopian *Snowpiercer* (2013), a Czech–South Korean coproduction.

Poland: From Solidarity to Kieślowski The most energetic Eastern European cinema of the 1970s and 1980s was found in Poland. Neither as liberated as Hungary nor as repressive as Czechoslovakia or Romania, Poland offered filmmakers some latitude for social criticism. Although production units had been dissolved in the wake of the 1968 demonstrations (see Young Cinema in Poland p. 405), they were soon reconstituted, and filmmakers acquired greater freedom. Each production unit consisted of an artistic director (usually a major filmmaker) and a literary director (usually a screenwriter). During the early 1970s, filmmakers adhered to safe literary and historical subjects. Midway through the decade, in synchronization with popular discontent with economic policy, there arose the "cinema of moral concern."

A prime example was Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Marble* (1976), a fictionalized investigation of a "model worker" from the 1950s. The filmmaker Agnieszka tries to find out why Birkut, a loyal bricklayer, was erased from history. In an echo of *Citizen Kane*, her interviews with people who knew Birkut frame extensive flashbacks. Wajda's exposure of Stalinist and post-Stalinist political intrigue reflexively invokes cinema's ability to create ideology (**25.42**). At first, Agnieszka trusts the camera as a documentary tool, but by the end of the film, denied raw stock and a camera, she must discover the truth directly, through human contact with Birkut's son.

In the wake of *Man of Marble*, a harder-line vice-minister of culture for films came to power, and the filmmaking community protested. Directors pointed out that the public was treating film as the conscience of Poland, the only witness to the conditions of social life. Feliks Falk's *Top Dog* (1977), Zanussi's *Spiral* (1978), and other films of "moral concern" countered the regime's boasts about improved living standards with charges that Poles had sacrificed their honor and conscience.

When Solidarity's strikes galvanized the nation in 1980, film workers rallied to the cause. As Solidarity won initial concessions from the government, the annual national film festival in Gdansk announced a new socially critical cinema. From the production units supervised by Wajda and Zanussi came several films reflecting the new realism. In Wajda's *Man of Iron* (1980), a sequel to *Man of Marble*, Agnieszka and Birkut's son press their investigation into the 1960s and 1970s. It was shot during the



Man of Marble

25.42 *Man of Marble*: Birkut's triumphs as a bricklayer staged for the "documentary" camera.

Solidarity strike and incorporated documentary footage of contemporary events. Attacking the government with unprecedented audacity, *Man of Iron* quickly became the most widely seen Polish film in history.

When the gains of Solidarity were overturned by the government, the outspoken filmmakers felt the counterblows. But Gorbachev's new policies toward Eastern Europe led the government to open negotiations with Solidarity, and Polish filmmakers returned to the cinema of moral urgency. The most significant of them was Krzysztof Kieślowski. He had made his name during the 1970s with barbed television documentaries and *The Scar* (1976), an acerbic study of an ineffectual factory foreman. In *Camera Buff* (1979), a worker tries to make an amateur film about his factory but collides with bureaucratic obstacles.

Kieślowski's skepticism about political answers led him to probe more essential questions: "What is the true meaning of life? Why get up in the morning? Politics don't answer that."[7] *Blind Chance* (1981) presents three hypothetical plots, tracing out the life choices available to its hero: becoming a party leader, an opposition fighter, or an apolitical bystander. In a pungent mixture of the religious and the secular, Kieślowski's series of television films, *The Decalogue* (1988), offers a story for each of the Ten Commandments (**25.43**). Two of these somber morality plays were expanded into features (*A Short Film about Killing* and *A Short Film about Love*, both 1988).

Kieślowski became Eastern Europe's most widely known filmmaker. The plot of *The Double Life of Véronique* (1991), involving two apparently identical women living in different countries, found a ready audience around the world (**Color Plate 25.28**). Shot in Poland and France, it was funded by a French production firm and StudioCanal. Even more successful was his "three colors" trilogy on contemporary Europe: the mournful *Blue* (1993), the satiric *White* (1993), and the spiritually mysterious *Red* (1994), which ends by showing how the protagonists of the other two films have fared. Unabashedly humanistic, teasing the viewer with secret doublings and fateful coincidences, wrapped in thrilling musical scores by Zbigniew Preisner, these films convinced many critics that the tradition of postwar modernism could still flourish.

The Decalogue 1

25.43 In *The Decalogue 1*, young Pawel embarks on his search for the soul—which his father will deny exists—with tragic results.

Polish national politics oscillated between left and right during the 2000s and 2010s. Under the nationalist Law and Justice Party, liberal reforms were rolled back and Solidarity was vilified. Yet both liberal and conservative regimes increased funding for cinema, and attendance rose. After Kieślowski's early death in 1996, however, no Polish director achieved his stature.

Hungary: Old and New Auteurs Hungarian cinema suffered the least radical changes in the transition from Communism to capitalist democracy. In the 1970s, the country became a crucible for reform within a socialist economy. The Communist Party, though firmly in control, had tolerated multicandidate elections, and censorship was relatively relaxed. After the fall of Communism, Hungary was able to recover somewhat faster than its neighbors.

Yet, as in most former Soviet satellites, US films captured the market. The government's Motion Picture Foundation, created in 1991 to ease the transition to a free market, was still funding most local films many years later.

Both before and after the fall, Hungary turned out between twelve and twenty features annually, many of them signed by major directors. The most internationally visible director was István Szabó, whose *Confidence* (1979) led him to the high-profile German-financed *Mephisto* (1981), *Colonel Redl* (1983), and *Sunshine* (1999).

Arguably the most consistent and accomplished senior director in Hungary was Márta Mészáros. "I tell my own life story in most of my films. The search for Mother and Father is a determining experience in my own life."[8] Mészáros dramatized her quest in *Anna* (1981) and a fictionalized series of memoirs of growing up under Stalinism: *Diary for My Children* (1984; **25.44**), *Diary for My Loves* (1987), and *Diary for My Father and Mother* (1991). Mészáros's former husband Miklós Jancsó remained prolific, but none of his later films aroused the acclaim that had greeted his 1960s work. He eventually recaptured his home audience with absurdist comedies featuring two popular clowns playing gravediggers (e.g., *Damn You! The Mosquitoes*, 1999).

Diary for My Children

25.44 In a memoir as cinéphiliac as any offered by the French New Wave, Márta Mészarós recalls sharing her mother's love at a village movie show (*Diary for My Children*).

Sátántangó

25.45 *Satan's Tango*: a blast of wind, whirling scraps of paper, two men striding away from us, the camera tracking behind them: in a shot lasting nearly two minutes, Tarr hides his characters' identity and forces us into the rhythm of their walk.

In the 1990s, a group of younger Hungarian directors came to attention with black-and-white films that were sour in tone, enigmatic in subject matter, and quietly daring in execution. György Fehér's *Passion* (1998) was a dank, grainy story of rural adultery, shot in long takes. The most famous exponent of this grimy style was Béla Tarr. Tarr came to international attention with *Satan's Tango (*1994), an adaptation of an experimental Hungarian novel. In a bleak, muddy village, desperate liaisons and a shady cattle deal unfold with aching slowness, all observed by a doctor sitting at a window and trying to write down everything he sees. Running for seven and a half hours, *Satan's Tango* made Tarr a leader of the "slow cinema" style (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 565).

An admirer of the early Jancsó, Tarr relied on tightly choreographed long takes. But they move at a lugubrious pace, as if the characters are walking underwater (**25.45**). Why is everything so slow? Tarr answered that a shot had to respect many protagonists, not just the characters: "Scenery, the weather, time, and locations have their own faces and they are important."[9] In *Werckmeister Harmonies* (2000), a seedy town welcomes a circus exhibiting a stuffed whale, and Tarr's camera studies the creature's giant eye as reverently as if it were a human face. In the twelve-minute opening shot of *The Man from London* (2007), the camera scans a steamship docked alongside a railway station, discovers a mysterious drama in the distance, then pulls back to reveal a solitary man in a tower brooding over the scene. Recalling the Sensibilist trend, Tarr's lustrous imagery reinvigorated the tradition of contemplative cinema.

Despite being dominated by Hollywood imports, Hungary continued to host one of the most innovative cinemas in Eastern Europe. The comic subway thriller *Kontroll* (2003) won international distribution and a US genre-based career for its director Nimród Antal. *Johanna* (2005), a cinematic opera set in a decaying hospital, presented a drug addict as a modern Joan of Arc. Györgi Pálfi's *Taxidermia* (2006) was a grotesque satire that suggested that Communism attacked the very bodies of its followers. The ambitious young director Benedek Flieghauf offered a teasing network narrative (*The Forest*, 2003), a remorseless look into the narcotics trade (*Dealer*, 2004), and a ten-shot film that soberly scrutinized people in enigmatic situations (*Milky Way*, 2007). Flieghauf moved to English language production with the science-fiction drama *Womb* (2010).

The spirit of innovation was strong as well in *Son of Saul* (2015). This tale of a prisoner working in a Nazi death camp gained fame not only for its powerful situation but also for its daring style. Director László Nemes uses the mobile handheld technique associated with the free-camera trend, but then he "unfrees" the camera by limiting nearly every shot to a close view of the protagonist reacting to action offscreen or in the background, as when guards close a door in the distance (**Color Plate 25.29**). This was, Nemes claimed, an exercise in immersion: "The human experience within the camp was based on limitation and lack of information. No one could know or see that much. So how do you convey that?"[10] The precise timing of performance and camera movement recalls, on a more claustrophobic scale, the tight choreography of Jancsó's long takes of the 1960s (see Miklós Jancsó p. 409). Nemes extended his experiments in restricted viewpoint to the historical intrigue of *Sunset* (2018), which follows a woman searching for her anarchist brother.

ROMANIA: A NEWER WAVE

Romania had a long cinematic tradition, and some directors, notably Mircea Daneliuc and Lucian Pintilie, enjoyed distinguished careers from the 1970s onward. But on the whole, Romanian cinema was unknown outside the country. In the mid-2000s, films by younger directors began winning prizes at the Cannes Film Festival, and critical tastemakers began to believe that there was a Romanian New Wave.

Romania had been one of the most tyrannically ruled Communist countries. Nicolae Ceausescu impoverished the economy and built up a police state. Hundreds of thousands were murdered or simply disappeared. During the 1989 breakup of the Soviet bloc, Ceausescu was deposed and executed. As the country established democratic institutions amid struggles between liberal and conservative parties, it joined the European Union in 2007.

Under Communism, the film industry had been given funding from general ticket sales, as in Western Europe. But attendance was low and tickets had been cheap. The industry had made twenty to thirty features a year; now it was making two or three. No one was investing in exhibition, which was controlled by the government. The 450 theaters in the Ceausescu era had fallen to around 60. Most people's film viewing consisted of pirated videotapes.

After bureaucratic jostling, state support came in the form of a script competition administered by the National Center for Cinema. At the same time, private interests set up modern studio facilities that attracted foreign shooting, notably *Cold Mountain* (2003). Other investment enabled Romania's first multiplex to open in 2000. During its first year of operation, it attracted two-thirds of the city's box-office revenues. In the meantime, short films from young directors were winning prizes at festivals, and these new talents attracted funding for their debut features.

The breakthrough was Cristi Puiu's *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* (2005), which detailed in absurd and pathetic detail the last hours of an old man shuttled from hospital to hospital (**25.46**). Although it was more than two and half hours long, it captivated critics with its darkly humorous critique of institutional indifference. In 2006 came films about the Romanian uprising of 1989: the comedy *12:08 East of Bucharest*, the drama *The Paper Will Be Blue*, and the coming-of-age story *The Way I Spent the End of the World*, about a teenage girl growing up in a slum. All won festival prizes.

By then there were more than a dozen Romanian releases a year and the National Center was giving more than seven million euros per year in support. The strategy seemed confirmed by the worldwide success of *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* (2007) by Cristian Mungiu. This short-time-span story somewhat akin to *Cléo from 5 to 7* (see New Cinema: The Left Bank p. 395) follows a pair of college women as one seeks an illegal abortion. To build support for the film, Mungiu hired a mobile cinema and took the film on tour through the countryside. *4 Months* proved the most popular Romanian film of its year, despite the controversy aroused by a shot of an aborted fetus.

The Death of Mr. Lazarescu

25.46 Mr. Lazarescu, relaxing beside his apparently dead cat, notices a symptom (*The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*).

For a decade, Romanian films continued to win festival prizes. Mungiu's *Graduation* (2016) centered on a doctor juggling family problems, an extramarital affair, and the need to help his daughter get into colleges. In Puiu's *Sieranevada* (2016), a family gathers in an apartment to honor their dead father. Both films were funded by sources outside Romania, including Eurimages and sales agents.

The "New Romanian Cinema" largely relied on the free-camera approach, though with exceptionally long takes. *Police, Adjective* (2009, Corneliu Porumboiu) contains three ten-minute shots. For *4 Months*, Mungiu explained, "I was looking for very pure mechanisms of sustaining the tension within the film without using fast editing or music. In the last 45 minutes, a lot of people experience this film as a thriller, although it's still done in one shot per scene"[11] (**25.47**). *Sieranevada* was filmed in both a real apartment and a studio set designed to match. The roaming camera becomes as confined as a witness on the scene would be.

(continued)

ROMANIA: A NEWER WAVE, continued

4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days

25.47 *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days:* In a four-minute handheld shot, the heroine, carrying her fearsome burden, feels endangered on the street.

As filmmaking grew in prestige, the audience expanded. Between 2008 and 2016, the number of screens tripled to nearly 400. Attendance shot up from 3.4 million in 2008 to 13 million in 2016. This jump had no parallel elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Over the same period, Romania attracted runaway production and hosted its own film festivals. Even though the new films usually did not claim big box office, they spurred the growth of a national film culture while putting a small country on the world's cinematic map.

From the USSR to the CIS

Over forty years, the USSR went from a Communist regime to a nominally capitalist one, and from an authoritarian regime to a supposedly democratic one. The changes in the film industry were dizzying. Eventually there emerged a popular cinema consisting of local blockbusters and genre pictures alongside big Hollywood imports. Just as important, these years fostered the first films of severe social criticism ever made in the former Soviet territories. Even if freedom was curtailed, major filmmakers emerged to portray harsh realities in challenging forms.

1970s—1985: Brezhnev and Stagnation From 1964 to 1982, Leonid Brezhnev served as secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Opposed to reform, ruled by elderly officials, the regime exuded stability. Citizens acquired televisions, refrigerators, and cars. At the same time, Brezhnev pursued a policy of military intervention by assisting revolts in North Africa and invading Afghanistan.

Yet Brezhnev's USSR stagnated. Agricultural and industrial production declined, and so did health and living standards. Corruption, inefficiency, and overextended military commitments drained the state's resources. Neither Brezhnev nor the two elderly general secretaries who succeeded him faced up to the challenges. Culturally, there was another "freeze." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov, and other dissidents were silenced by exile or imprisonment.

In keeping with Brezhnev's urge to satisfy consumer tastes, Goskino, the agency overseeing cinema, encouraged popular entertainment. Andrei Konchalovsky's epic *Siberiade* (1979) proved that a spectacle mounted like a Hollywood blockbuster could attract audiences. The best-loved film of the period, *Irony of Fate; or, Enjoy Your Bath!* (1975) was a romantic comedy based on a simple premise: a man from Moscow finds himself in St. Petersburg and discovers that his key opens a woman's apartment. Another film made for diversion was *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980), the first Soviet film to win an Academy Award. There was even an unexpectedly popular Soviet Western, *The White Sun of the Desert* (1970).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Russia aimed to satisfy its public with up to 150 annual releases, while each of the satellite countries produced far fewer. Foreign imports came from friendly countries such as Cuba, China, and India. But pirated videotapes flooded the country, and by the 1990s citizens of the USSR were seeing American films at all budget levels.

Tarkovsky and the Ethics of Art Despite the conservatism of the Brezhnev era, some slice-of-life films gave voice to the problems of daily existence, especially among Soviet youth. Dinara Asanova (*The Restricted Boy*, 1977), Lana Gogoberidze (*Some Interviews on Personal Matters*, 1979), and other women directors created distinctive psychological studies. The lyrical tendencies associated with the republics' studios continued in the work of Georgian director Tengiz Abuladze (most notably in the banned *Repentance*, 1984).

The Ascent

25.48 In *The Ascent*, Sotnikov becomes paralleled to Christ in his willingness to sacrifice himself for other Russian prisoners.

In addition, several directors created idiosyncratic, self-consciously artistic works that reflected both European art cinema and Russian traditions. Larissa Shepitko's films emphasize individual conscience and moral choice in the vein of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and anti-Stalinist literature. Her World War II film *The Ascent* (1977) shows two partisan soldiers captured by the Germans and forced to decide between collaboration and execution. The intellectual Sotnikov, having conquered his fear of death in an earlier skirmish, bears up under torture and accepts death with an eerie, Christlike gentleness (**25.48**).

The most visible exponent of an artistic cinema opposed to mass genres and propaganda films remained Andrei Tarkovsky. The science-fiction saga *Solaris* (1972) had somewhat mitigated the scandal of *Andrei Rublev* (see 1966; see Young Cinema in the Soviet Union p. 403), but the dreamlike *The Mirror* (1975) confirmed that he worked in a mystical vein fiercely opposed to the mainstream.

Considered a "reactionary," Tarkovsky insisted on family, poetry, and religion as central forces in social life. He opposed films hammering a political message and argued for a cinema of evocative impressions—a position that put him close to the Sensibilist German directors. But his somber films seek to engage the spectator in a more philosophical way than do those of Herzog and Wenders. *Stalker* (1979) presents an allegorical expedition through a wrecked postindustrial landscape into "the Zone," a region where human identity can be fundamentally changed. Filmed in a gray murk, *Stalker* uses hypnotic camera movements to create what the director called "the pressure of the time" running through the shots (**Color Plate 25.30; Video 25.4**).[12]

Tarkovsky went to Italy to make *Nostalghia* (1983), a melancholy, virtually nonnarrative meditation on memory and exile. He decided not to return to the USSR. In Sweden, he filmed the Bergmanesque *The Sacrifice* (1986), which won the special jury prize at the Cannes Film Festival. By the time of his death in 1986, Tarkovsky had become an emblem of the cinema of artistic conscience. His prominence abroad had saved his films from shelving, and, even if they went unseen in the USSR, they were saleable foreign exports. He influenced the pictorialist strain of European cinema during the 1970s and 1980s, and his Soviet contemporaries gathered courage from his resistance to official policies. A self-conscious auteur on the European model, Tarkovsky demanded that art be a moral quest: "Masterpieces are born of the artist's struggle to express his ethical ideals."[13]

1985–2000: Cinema of Glasnost When Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the USSR, he decided to face reality. He revealed that the Soviet system was on the verge of financial collapse. His announcement that the USSR would no longer sustain its satellites in Eastern Europe led to the overthrow of Communist regimes there. Gorbachev also called for a policy of *glasnost* ("openness"), which initiated a long-overdue rebuilding of Soviet institutions, or *perestroika* ("restructuring"). Another "thaw" had begun (see Stalin's Death and the New Humanism p. 350).

At first, Gorbachev sought to implement reforms through the chain of party command, but then he pressed for a rapid shift to individual initiative and a market system. An aborted coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 triggered the dissolution of the Communist Party. Boris Yeltsin ascended to leadership, and the USSR was replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Now Russia, the Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, and other former Soviet republics would function as separate nations. The Cold War that had ruled world political strategy since World War II was ended.

Even before Gorbachevs arrival, filmmakers were risking new directions. Rolan Bykov's *Scarecrow* (1983), a film about a village girl despised by her classmates, quietly celebrates indigenous tradition and historical memory over the harsh selfishness of Brezhnev's consumerism (**25.49**). Alexei German's *My Friend Ivan Lapshin* (1983; banned until 1985) mixes newsreels and abstractly staged footage to criticize Stalinist models of political crimes.

The World War II genre was given a new savagery in Elem Klimov's *Come and See* (1985), a harrowing portrayal of the German occupation of Byelorussia (**25.50**). Based on an idea of Klimov's wife, the deceased Larissa Shepitko, *Come and See* presented the naïve young hero as something less than the Socialist Realist ideal. During the

Scarecrow

Come and See

25.49, *left* The hard, Westernized Soviet teenagers of *Scarecrow*.

25.50, *right* To-camera address intensifies the brutality of *Come and See*. Here the young hero returns to his village and is told that his family has been massacred.

same period, Sergei Paradzhanov, now released from prison, returned to feature filmmaking. *The Legend of Suram Fortress* (1984) recalls *The Color of Pomegranates* in its stylized simplicity and vibrant textures (**Color Plate 25.31**). A "parallel cinema" shot on 16 mm and Super 8 mm was beginning to lurk in students' apartments and artists' basements.

Glasnost and perestroika opened up the film industry. In May 1986, at the Congress of Soviet Filmmakers, Klimov was elected head of the union. The same congress set in motion the restructuring of the official film agency Goskino. Under the new policy, Goskino would serve principally as a conduit for funds and a source of facilities. Filmmaking would be in the hands of free creative production units on the Eastern European model. In addition, censorship was markedly liberalized.

One of Klimov's major reforms was the establishment of the Conflict Commission, aimed at the review and release of banned films. Soon critical works such as the humanistic war dramas *My Friend Ivan Lapshin* and *Commissar* (1967) and Tengiz Abuladze's surreal satire *Repentance* were taken off the shelf. In the year after his death, Tarkovsky was honored with a complete retrospective in his homeland.

Filmmakers had new freedom to reinterpret Soviet history. Stalin's policies were attacked in *The Cold Summer of '53* (1987), a Soviet Western that shows a village terrorized by a gang of released political prisoners. Aleksei German's *Khrustalyov, My Car!* (1998) returned to 1953, focusing on a doctor caught up in the paranoia of Kremlin leaders right after Stalin's death. With the camera squeezing through overstuffed parlors and kitchens, it presents a comic phantasmagoria of a bloated and decaying society. Valery Ogorodnikov's *Prishvin's Paper Eyes* (1989) portrays the early days of Soviet television, with jabs at propaganda filming. One remarkable sequence mixes newsreels and Eisenstein's Odessa Steps massacre to suggest that Stalin is selecting the victims from a balcony.

Other controversial subjects came under scrutiny. Youth films dwelt on student rebellion, often laced with rock music and a post-Punk anomie (Sergei Solvyev's *Assa*, 1988). *Chernukha*, or "black cinema," rubbed audiences' noses in the sordidness of daily life and predatory politics. Satiric films mocked party tradition and current fashions. Even mass entertainment exploited the new attitudes, as when the enormously successful gangster film *King of Crime* (1988) showed the KGB, the state, and criminals conspiring to defraud the public. The prototype of glasnost cinema was Vasily Pichul's *Little Vera* (1988). Vera's cynical selfishness and promiscuity deflated the myth of the virtuous heroine who could sacrifice all for the collective.

Glasnost and perestroika gave more autonomy to the republics as well. In Kazakhstan, quasi-Punk directors offered films like *The Needle* (1988), a drug movie bearing the influence of Hollywood melodrama, Fassbinder, and Wenders's road sagas. In Georgia, Alexander Rekhviashvili made *The Step* (1986), a structurally adventurous, wryly absurd film about the meaningless routines of Soviet life. Before Paradzhanov's death in 1990, he directed *Ashik Kerib* (1989), a literary adaptation transformed by his ritualized treatment of Georgian legend and ethnic custom.

Anarchy in the Industry But these reforms did not make the film industry prosper. Crony capitalism took over the Russian government. Yeltsin's regime failed to put in place the institutions that would guide Russia toward an open economy. Business tycoons known as "oligarchs" loaned money to the government in return for control of oil, gas, and other natural resources. Privatization led not to competition but a scramble for political power.

Because the studios attracted cash, the state resisted privatizing them, but it did demand that they operate at a profit. The state encouraged filmmakers to form private companies and independent cooperatives. Formerly Goskino had sole distribution power, but now independent producers could distribute their own products.

While some media oligarchs emerged, by and large the market was a jungle. No legislation regulated film activity. Video piracy raged out of control. The devaluation

of the ruble increased production costs tenfold, and top directors could not get their films released. Clandestine companies churned out pornography, often as conduits for black-market funds.

Like their counterparts in Eastern Europe, CIS filmmakers were eager for coproductions with the West, but few materialized. British, French, and Italian film companies launched "international" pictures featuring prominent Western stars in CIS locales. Mosfilm, Lenfilm, and other studios became service facilities for runaway productions.

Before glasnost, Russian national production hovered at 150 features per year; in 1991, 400 features were made. A year later, there were fewer than 100, and most of those did not get theatrical release. Private investors and TV stations financed entertainment along Western lines. After the success of the gritty action film *Brother* (1997), which centered on a soldier who becomes a hired killer, there followed a string of crime pictures centered on avenging cops and heroic KGB agents. On the whole, most local products were unpopular.

Attendance dropped to around one-tenth of theater capacity. Old or cheap American pictures dominated the market, capturing 70 percent of audiences. The Hollywood studios cautiously sent films in, but Russia hardly constituted a major market. In 1999, even though American films dominated the theaters, they took in less than $9 million at the box office.

A few art films got overseas attention, with several nominated for Academy Awards and one, Nikita Mikhalkov's *Burnt by the Sun* (1994), winning. *Taxi Blues* (1990, Pavel Lungin), a Soviet–French coproduction, portrays a decaying urbanism and rudderless characters (**Color Plate 25.32**). Vitaly Kanevsky's *Freeze, Die, Come to Life!* (1990), a "black film," suggests the savagery pervading contemporary Soviet life by means of a story about children's corruption in a village during World War II (**25.51**).

Freeze, Die, Come to Life!

25.51 Ramshackle structures and a sea of mud: the landscape of Soviet life in *Freeze, Die, Come to Life!*

Sokurov and the Tarkovsky Tradition The creation of the CIS forced regional studios to privatize. The struggle was acute, and it was best weathered by Ukraine, which fostered a lyrical but hard-edged cinema in the tradition of Dovzhenko. Kira Muratova, a veteran director since the 1960s, saw several of her shelved films return to circulation. She became the outstanding Ukrainian director, with *Asthenic Syndrome* (1989) emerging as a milestone of social criticism. She continued to make offbeat films, principally with Western funding, into the 2010s.

The most visible Russian filmmaker of the glasnost years was another veteran. Aleksandr Sokurov's first feature, *The Solitary Voice of a Man* (1978; shelved until 1987), harks back to the 1920s avant-garde in its elliptical narrative and crisp montage, but it also has the disturbingly dreamlike quality that would typify much of his work. Sokurov initially became known for his literary adaptations, but after glasnost, thanks to foreign financing, he was able to develop his expressionistic side. *The Second Circle* (1990), a stark black-and-white exercise, examines the minutiae of a primal ritual: a son prepares his father's corpse for burial. *Whispering Pages* (1992) meditates on the works of Nikolai Gogol and Fyodor Dostoevsky, with a spectral hero drifting along murky canals and through cavernous tunnels. We glimpse the action dimly, through haze; occasionally, white birches are superimposed on the scene.

Sokurov's most widely seen expressionist exercise was *Mother and Son* (1997). A companion piece to *The Second Circle*, it shows a young man visiting his ailing mother. He carries her out from her farmhouse and reads to her. He takes her back inside. He wanders out into a vast, phantasmic landscape. He returns to find her dead, and he rests his face on her hand. Almost completely without dialogue, *Mother and Son* creates a poignancy through the simplicity of its situation and Sokurov's daring use of distorting lenses and filters. He films the landscape through paint-streaked glass, a "special effect" that creates an unearthly realm halfway between realism and abstraction (**Color Plate 25.33**).

Sokurov became something of a provocateur with emblematic dramas involving major historical figures (Hitler in *Moloch*, 1999; Lenin in *Tauris*, 2001; Emperor Hirohito in *The Sun*, 2005). His arthouse hit proved to be a hallucinatory survey of Russian history by way of a tour of St. Petersburg's Hermitage museum. In a single shot lasting more than ninety minutes, *Russian Ark* (2002) trails tsars, courtiers, and commoners through corridors and galleries, the pageant culminating in a ghostly ball and the stately collapse of the aristocracy (**Color Plate 25.34**). After

brooding on the nation's follies and excesses, the shot ends on a nighttime view of steam rising from the river, implying that the nation's past yields up a melancholy poetry.

2000 Onward: Managed Democracy and Popular Entertainment Communism may have failed as a political ideology, but well-connected party officials grew rich in the frenzy of privatization. Organized crime moved into government and major industries. As Russia defaulted on its debts and US consultants made matters worse, the economy stumbled from crisis to crisis, crashing in 1998. Buildings and streets were crumbling, and the population, among the sickest in the world, was dying off. Foreign investors largely stayed out.

An ailing President Yeltsin was succeeded in 2000 by former KGB agent Vladimir Putin, who stepped up the war against the breakaway region Chechnya. Putin's ascent coincided with a surge in petroleum prices, and Russia's vast reserves of gas and oil fueled an economic boom. Putin forced Yeltsin's oligarchs out of politics and transferred key industries back to governmental control. By bringing in foreign investment, he enabled his disciples, mostly KGB officials, to become fabulously wealthy—a new regime of oligarchs. Ordinary Russians, plunged into poverty under Yeltsin, saw their wages double. A middle class embraced modern Westernized lifestyles.

But prosperity came at the cost of civil rights and free speech. Putin tightened his control by denying rival parties access to the media. Television stations criticizing official policies were shut down, and the government set up a 24-hour channel promoting the regime's line, including praise of Stalin. Dissenters were beaten, arrested, or murdered.

In 2008, Putin served as prime minister under a handpicked ally, and in 2012 he defied opposition to reassume the presidency. His second stay in office encountered an economic decline triggered by the worldwide depression and falling oil prices. In response, Putin seized control of businesses, further stifled dissent, launched foreign invasions, and blasted out nationalistic propaganda. He called his policy "managed democracy."

Under Putin's regime, Hollywood finally entered the market. The newly affluent audience was ready for American blockbusters. As in other countries, multiplexing yielded big benefits, accelerated by the conversion to digital exhibition. Box-office income surpassed a billion dollars in 2010, and Russia became the world's seventh biggest film market.

Unlike most of its former Eastern European satellites and the "independent" territories in the CIS, Russia now had a fairly stable film industry. But although there were home-grown hits, most Russian productions lost money. Hollywood attracted three-quarters of box-office revenues.

Night Watch

25.52 In *Night Watch*, the vampire hunter saves himself with a reflecting mirror.

One director adroitly adjusted to new conditions. Timur Bekmambetov, a veteran of TV commercials, broke through to features with *Night Watch* (2004). Based on a fantasy fiction series and massively advertised on television, *Night Watch* offered a gothic purée of video games, hard rock music, CGI effects, and plot premises taken from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (**25.52**). It cost $4 million and garnered an unprecedented $30 million across the CIS. The sequel *Day Watch* (2007) made even more. 20th Century Fox bought both for international distribution.

Meanwhile, Bekmambetov released *Irony of Fate: The Continuation* (2007). The sequel to the 1975 original was promoted through a Western-style gimmick: viewers could enter a contest that awarded the winner an apartment in St. Petersburg. The film was shown on virtually every CIS screen, and it set a new box-office record. Soon Bekmambetov was dividing his time between Russian projects and Hollywood ones like *Ben Hur* (2016). Understanding the demand for franchises, sequels, and remakes, Bekmambetov incarnated the Americanization of Russian cinema.

Fitting in, Challenging Consensus Under Putin cultural policy turned strongly nationalist, and filmmakers, along with other artists, were subjected to government pressures. Right-wing agitators disrupted plays and concerts, and members of the punk rock group Pussy Riot were sentenced to prison for performances exhibiting "religious hatred."

In December 2014, Putin signed a decree establishing a national cultural policy. The decree asserted Russia's uniqueness and its roots in Orthodox Christianity. Artists were told not to "offend the feelings of believers." Tolerance and multiculturalism were abandoned. Although there was no official censorship, the aim, as in the Soviet days, was to make artists bend to political demands.

Filmmakers were divided in their support for Putin's regime. Nikita Mikhalkov began his career in the Brezhnev era with a certain noncomformity. *A Slave of Love* (1976)

and *Unfinished Piece for Player Piano* (1977) experimented with reflexivity in the manner of Fellini and other European directors. *Dark Eyes* (1987) was an Italian–Russian coproduction of the sort encouraged in the Gorbachev years. His *Burnt by the Sun*, a critical treatment of the Stalin terror, became a symbol of what glasnost had done for film culture. When Putin acceded to power, however, Mikhalkov became a strident supporter. *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus* (2010) was Russia's most expensive film to date and its biggest flop. Critics charged Mikhalkov with wanting to reestablish a simplistic, heroic Socialist Realism that would please his friends in the Kremlin.

Other filmmakers persisted in the Russian tradition of questioning power and exposing oppression. Sokurov continued to make eccentric, provocative films, thanks chiefly to foreign funding. Even though Putin helped finance his *Faust* (2011), Sokurov challenged Russia's violent annexation of Ukraine in 2015 and the jailing of a Ukrainian filmmaker.

Younger filmmakers turned traditional genres and themes upside down. Attacking bureaucracy was a standby of Soviet-era fiction and film, but Andrey Zvyagintsev updated it for the Putin era in *Leviathan* (2014). The film shows a hotheaded landowner struggling against a corrupt legal system backed by the Church. Sergei Loznitsa's *In the Fog* (2012) deromanticized the World War II partisan film, and his *Donbass* (2018) brought the same bleak attitude to vignettes of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The 1964 "thaw" film *There Was a Lad* (see Young Cinema in the Soviet Union p. 402) had shown a truck driver's upbeat encounters with modern Soviet life, but Loznitsa's ironically titled *My Joy* (2010) takes its trucker on a despairing road trip (**25.53**). These films and others exposed the bleak results of "managed democracy."

Critique of political power took a monumental, morbid form in the *DAU* project (2020–). Director Ilya Khrzhanovsky spent three years shooting 700 hours of a biography of a Soviet scientist. Hundreds of nonprofessional actors lived in a replica of a research institute, while visitors to the compound were pressed into playing roles as well. The footage was carved into thirteen features. Two, *Natasha* and *Degeneratsia*, together run more than eight hours and teem with disturbing images of sex, violence, and oppression. Tracing dozens of characters over thirty years, the *DAU* project became an ultimate network narrative. It also had affinities with Dogme 95 (see Back to Basics: Dogme 95 p. 687) in being completely improvised. Khrzhanovsky denied traumatizing his performers but admitted, "It's a dangerous game, for sure."[14]

Alexei German's last film, *Hard to Be a God* (2013), was another dystopian milestone. Made over a period of fifteen years, it was completed by his son and widow after German's death. Its science-fiction plot shows a planet mired in the prejudices and tyranny of the Middle Ages. A scientist from earth, taking the identity of a knight, wades through a swamp of leering brutes who hate both knowledge and beauty. The stuffed tracking shots of *Khrustalyov, My Car!* become nightmarishly immersive. German crams his frames with muck and decay, violence and misery, blood and feces, squirming animals and dirty armor (**25.54**). *Hard to Be a God* was the most horrifying vision of decaying Russia ever put on film.

As US films gained ground overseas in the 1970s, European filmmakers were forced to rely on state support and cross-national financing. During the postwar decades, they had benefited from coproductions overseen by national governments, but starting in the 1970s, filmmakers in both the West and East could also draw on the European Union, television companies, investment circles, and media empires.

The strengthening of European unity and the collapse of Soviet Communism accelerated pressures toward less overtly political, more accessible cinema—pan-European films and commercial entertainments. Most filmmakers sought to blend Hollywood principles and production

My Joy

25.53 During a traffic stop, the trucker encounters a girl prostitute (*My Joy*).

Hard to Be a God

25.54 *Hard to Be a God*: an impromptu amputation on a medieval planet. German's packed frames and distorting wide-angle lenses recall Eisenstein's *Bezhin Meadow* (12.12).

values with local tastes in comedy and drama. Some sought to entice audiences with variants on the art-cinema conventions pioneered in earlier eras. Still other directors remained wedded to more challenging cinema, offering either uncomfortable realism or formal experiment. Emerging auteurs remained faithful to their visions but consigned many European products to the festival circuit and specialized theaters.

Whatever the strategy, the outcome was the same. At the end of the 2010s, nearly all European filmmakers had failed to beat Hollywood in their domestic markets, win audiences in other territories, or expand their niche in the United States. EU attendance rose steeply in 2019, and Russia's industry hit a record level, making it the biggest European market. But in most countries local releases benefited little. The box-office surge came from unusually successful Hollywood blockbusters, including *Avengers: Endgame*, *Frozen 2*, and *The Lion King*. And as elsewhere, video games and the Internet were threatening to lure people out of theaters.

A cynic might conclude that the millions of euros spent on thousands of films were wasted. Yet Hollywood had long proven that quantity boosted quality. An industry producing many films had a chance of producing some good, even great ones. European subsidies, investments, and international support kept the number of releases robust. Out of the churn emerged hundreds of films that added immensely to the artistic heritage of cinema.

That heritage was severely threatened by forces massing in the late 2010s. International stability was under threat by the growth of right-wing parties responding to mass immigration and cuts in social programs. Authoritarian rulers emerged in Turkey and Hungary. The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU promised years of turmoil to come.

Most staggering was the coronavirus outbreak, which killed more than 300,000 people in Europe in 2020. The pandemic demanded massive government investment and forced changes in people's social habits. Some feared that the crisis would break the EU altogether. World cinema plunged into economic uncertainty as theaters closed and film production was suspended. Suddenly, the future of European cinema seemed likely to be very different from its past, in ways no one could predict.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in "Iosseliani on Iosseliani," in *The 24th Hong Kong International Film Festival Catalogue* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 2000), p. 138.
2. Margarethe von Trotta, "Female Film Aesthetics," in Eric Rentschler, ed., *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988), p. 89.
3. Quoted in Timothy Corrigan, *New German Film: The Displaced Image* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), p. 146.
4. Wim Wenders, "Three LPs by Van Morrison," in Jan Dawson, ed., *Wim Wenders* (New York: Zoetrope, 1976), p. 30.
5. Wim Wenders, "Impossible Stories," in *The Logic of Images: Essays and Conversations*, trans. Michael Hofmann (London: Faber, 1991), p. 59.
6. Mikhail Gorbachev, "A Common European Home," in Gale Stokes, ed., *From Stalinism to Pluralism: A Documentary History of Eastern Europe since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 266.
7. Quoted in Danusia Stok, *Kieślowski on Kieślowski* (London: Faber, 1993), p. 144.
8. Quoted in Barbara Koenig Quart, *Women Directors: The Emergence of a New Cinema* (New York: Praeger, 1988), p. 193.
9. Quoted in "Damnation: Jonathan Romney Talks to Béla Tarr," *Enthusiasm* 4 (Summer 2001): 3.
10. Quoted in Andrew Pulver, "I didn't want *Son of Saul* to tell the story of survival," *The Guardian* (April 14, 2016) at https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/apr/14/laszlo-nemes-i-didnt-want-son-of-saul-to-tell-the-story-of-survival/.
11. Quoted in Peter Debruge, "Cristian Mungiu," *Variety* (January 16, 2008), at http://variety.com/2008/film/markets-festivals/cristian-mungiu-2-1117979137/.
12. Andrei Tarkovsky, Sculpting *in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (London: Faber, 1989), p. 117.
13. Ibid., p. 27.
14. Quoted in A.J. Goldmann, "The Berlinale Unveils 8 Hours of 'DAU'. It's Just the Beginning," *The New York Times* (28 February 2020).

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:
On Aardman: "Tracking down Aardman creatures"
On José Luis Guerin as an example of modernist cinema at this period: "Three nights of a dreamer"
On Terence Davies: "Terence Davies: Sunset songs" and "Wisconsin Film Festival: Sometimes a camera movement..."
On Béla Tarr: "The sarcastic laments of Béla Tarr"
On Nemes' *Sunset*: "Venice 2018: A Dazzling Second Feature"

This Is Nollywood

CHAPTER 26

A DEVELOPING WORLD: CONTINENTAL AND SUBCONTINENTAL CINEMAS SINCE 1970

Baahubali

As radicals' hopes for extreme social change faded, belief in the Third World's revolutionary force seemed less plausible. Economists began to describe the regions as the "developing world." Literacy and life expectancy had increased, workers' earnings were growing, and the "green revolution" in agricultural practices had expanded food supplies. Some areas of Pacific Asia—Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea—grew prosperous quickly, chiefly through industrialization and investment in information technology. Because they enjoyed comparative political stability and shared many cultural and regional traditions, we consider those in Chapter 27. Here we examine continents and subcontinents of the developing world where progress was not so swift: Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and India.

Most of these regions were quite poor. In many countries, mechanized farming increased rural unemployment, forcing families into cities. As Mumbai (the former Bombay), Kolkata (the former Calcutta), Karachi, Delhi, Cairo, Istanbul, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, São Paolo, Lima, and Mexico City joined the ranks of the world's biggest cities, they were ringed by shantytowns and squatters' camps. By 1989, the top fifth of the world's population was sixty times richer than the bottom fifth. Thirty years later, despite considerable progress, these nations remained much less prosperous than most of the Western World and Pacific Asia.

Virtually all of these countries had been colonized by the West (see Chapter 18). After they threw off colonial rule, most did not substitute new products for the exports they had provided in the colonial era. Their debts to the West rose dizzyingly. This occurred just when the industrial countries, shaken by the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, began to cut foreign aid. A world recession in the early 1980s intensified developing nations' financial problems. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed austerity measures on debtor nations already plagued by inflation and corruption.

Many underdeveloped nations were governed by ruling families, military juntas, or dictators. As a result, the countries were often torn by wars—conflicts with neighbors, as in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, or civil struggles, as in the guerrilla wars of Latin America and the ethnic and religious strife of Africa. Political progress was often interrupted by kidnappings and assassinations. Disease began to spread as well; in 1988, one out of thirteen people in Zaire carried the HIV virus. Perhaps most alarmingly, the populations of the poorest nations were expanding quickly. In 1977, three-quarters of the world's people lived in the developing nations.

The following decades saw the rise of a middle class in some developing countries. While Africa remained persistently poor, major sections of Asia saw stunning improvement in living standards. Across the world, extreme poverty was declining, and maternal and childhood health was increasing. Still, the problems were immense. Mexico and parts of South America combated the violence of the drug trade; that, combined with lingering poverty and political upheavals, drove refugees to seek shelter in the United States. Wars and the hope of work led thousands in the Middle East and Africa to flee to Europe. Local wars in Iraq and Syria were complicated in 2013 by the rise of a cross-border extremist group, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL), which seized areas of those two countries and moved into others in Asia and Africa via affiliated groups. As a result, many regions were destabilized, and ISIL-inspired terrorist attacks flared up around the world.

NEW CINEMAS, NEW AUDIENCES

A filmmaker working in a developing nation faced major problems in the years after 1970. If a country had a studio system, it fell on hard times and gave way to independent filmmaking. Most nations had to face the growing global power of the US Majors, and video piracy threatened to shatter theatrical attendance. For most countries, the best rewards lay in building service facilities for international production (especially Hollywood's) and making a few successful domestic films each year. The highest-quality ones could find exposure on the growing festival circuit, which might lead to theatrical sales.

Huge as these problems were, many film industries survived them. They had some advantages of their own. In the 1960s, while filmgoing was in decline in the West, the audience expanded in most other regions, largely because of steady migration from the countryside to the cities. At that time, there were estimated to be 300 million moviegoers per year in Africa and the Middle East, and more than 800 million in Latin America. To satisfy this growing public, film production expanded in several emerging economies. In 1950, the world was releasing about 2,000 features per year, but by 1980 Asia alone was turning out that many. Around 1975, India became the world's most prolific industry, producing more films than the entirety of Europe.

Most developing nations discovered that if they wanted a national cinema, they would need government support. Even with India's flourishing commercial sector, more experimental "new cinema" films required state funding. In South America and Africa, however, state support was as volatile as the regional politics. Outside funding also helped. American investment in local production and the spread of multiplexes nurtured filmmaking in South America. Small-scale investment led Nigeria to develop a thriving industry based on low-budget video features.

Filmmakers also relied on coproduction arrangements with neighbors and European countries, often those that had been colonial rulers. Spain helped fund Latin American films. Many countries in Africa were former French colonies, and French dialects were spoken there. France continued to pour a great deal of funding into coproductions in these areas, helping keep film production alive.

Because of the problems of developing nations, new cinemas often proposed political critiques. The heritage of revolutionary cinema lived on in films about dictators' abuse of power, the plight of families, ethnic conflict, income inequality, and other sensitive issues. One of the more important realms of human rights involved women, long oppressed in developing countries. The United Nations' designation of 1975–1985 as the international "Decade of the Woman" helped groups address such issues as day care, abortion, and rape. Female filmmakers began to enter production, often focusing on women's concerns.

Even when directors took on political subjects or themes, most continued the movement of the early 1970s away from experimental forms and styles. Politically critical films from the developing world tended to rely on conventions of classical narrative or of art-cinema modernism. By abandoning extreme political modernism, filmmakers could reach larger audiences via international festivals.

AFRICAN CINEMA

Of all Third World regions, the continent of Africa remained the most underdeveloped. Although about 10 percent of the world's population lived there, the continent represented

only 1 percent of world's productivity and trade. After 1980, Africa's external debt was as large as its total gross product. Already poor in arable land, the region suffered from devastating droughts. As people fled their villages, the cities became the fastest-growing in the Third World. Of the thirty poorest countries in the world, twenty-five were in Africa.

Because of Africa's poverty, most of its countries did not produce a feature-length film before the mid-1970s. Many nations had small populations, few theaters, little capital, and virtually no technical facilities. Western film companies usually did not bother trying to sell films for distribution there or to invest in theaters. Most of the population knew Hollywood films only through bootleg videos. Local governments living on IMF austerity measures could support domestic production only sporadically.

As a result, African filmmakers cooperated. In 1970, they created FEPACI (Fédération Pan-Africaine des Cinéastes), an association of more than thirty countries that aimed to solve common problems. In 1980, the United Nations helped film workers found a continent-wide distribution network, CIDC (Consortium Interafricain de Distribution Cinématographique), to assist the circulation of African films. To the festivals of Carthage, in Tunisia (established in 1966), and Ouagadougou, in Burkina Faso (1969), was added another, in Mogadishu, Somalia (1981).

Such initiatives generated a little state support. Senegal, Algeria, and Tunisia nationalized film import and distribution. Some countries also nationalized production. Burkina Faso, despite its tiny size, became an administrative center of Black African film, increasing the importance of the annual Ouagadougou festival and creating a film school and a well-equipped production facility. New directors emerged, including Senegal's Safi Faye, the first Black African woman filmmaker (*Letter from My Village*, 1976).

But continental associations and state support failed to raise production or enhance distribution possibilities. The CIDC halted its work in 1984; of the 1,200 titles it distributed, only about sixty were African. The Cinafric studio in Burkina Faso remained the only indigenous production facility. Filmmaking was still an artisanal activity, with the director forced to raise funds, arrange publicity, and negotiate distribution. Few filmmakers completed second films, and those who did waited many years between projects.

The late 1980s saw little cooperation among African states. The continent's production outside Egypt and South Africa amounted to fewer than twenty features annually. Senegal, the leader of French language filmmaking on the continent, had produced around two dozen features, most notably the works of Ousmane Sembène (see Black African Cinema p. 486). The production of short films and documentaries was more robust, however, because such films were often educational and could be shown in schools and villages by traveling projection outfits.

There was some support from outside the continent. Some countries, notably Morocco, Tunisia, and South Africa, sustained industries largely on the basis of visiting foreign productions. France poured funding into coproductions in its former colonies, vital support in keeping film production alive. When films were made, international festivals were often eager to showcase them.

North Africa

The Francophone North African countries known as the Maghreb were in a better position to develop filmmaking than elsewhere in the region. In Morocco, private producers made a few popular entertainments on the model of Egyptian melodramas and musicals. One Moroccan filmmaker, Souheil Ben Barka, attracted attention with accessible dramas of social criticism, such as *A Thousand and One Hands* (1972), about the carpet industry, and *Amok* (1982), a treatment of South African apartheid filmed on a big budget and starring singer Miriam Makeba. In Tunisia, a mixture of government funding and private investment turned out a few coproductions.

Filmmakers often moved abroad, typically to France and other French-speaking nations. The few directors remaining in the Maghreb made occasional French–Algerian or French–Tunisian films. But others worked within their new countries. In 2013, Abdellatif Kechiche was hailed as the first Tunisian filmmaker to win the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for his *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. Kechiche had lived in France since age 6, and the film was a French–Belgian–Spanish production with no Tunisian subject matter.

The most significant film industry in the Maghreb was Algeria's. After winning its independence from France in 1962, Algeria nationalized all aspects of its film industry and successfully resisted a Hollywood boycott. Throughout the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the most influential films were dramas of the revolutionary struggle, such as Mohammed Lakhdar Hamina's *The Winds of the Aures* (1965).

In the early 1970s, Algeria's government shifted to the left, and social criticism emerged in a New Cinema, seen in Mohamed Bouamari's *The Charcoal Maker* (1973) and

Chronicle of the Years of Embers

26.1 *Chronicle of the Years of Embers*: the hero, wheeling the corpses of his plague-ridden family to the graveyard, follows the wise fool.

other works. Within two years, however, the New Cinema declined as the government began subsidizing big-budget historical dramas. The most famous of these, Hamina's *Chronicle of the Years of Embers* (1975; **26.1**), treated the history of the country between 1939 and 1954. Hamina's saga of village life under colonialism cost $2 million and became the first African film to win the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

Algeria then had the second highest film output in the Arab-African world, and its 300 theaters gave it an audience base. Popular cinema underwent a revival with satiric comedies and political thrillers, while some directors explored the everyday life of ordinary Algerians. In the early 1980s, filmmakers took up new themes, notably women's emancipation and workers' emigration to Europe.

At the same time, however, the government relinquished central control of filmmaking. As private companies began producing mass-market films, Algerian filmmakers pursued projects abroad and embarked on Francophone coproductions featuring European actors. Even militant members of the New Cinema generation found themselves, like Latin American and European proponents of critical political cinema, making more mainstream and accessible works. Some emigrants from Algeria found commercial success in French cinema, and during the mid-1980s a genre of *beur* (a colloquial anagram for "Arab") dramas and comedies featuring Algerian-French teenagers became popular. During the 1990s, as clashes between the government and Islamic groups increased, filmmaking virtually ground to a halt, with most of the projects completed being European coproductions. This situation lasted into the 2010s, with cinemas gradually shutting down.

Sub-Saharan Africa

In Black Africa before the 1990s, some production was in a mass-market vein. Cameroon turned out police thrillers as well as very successful comedies by Daniel Kamwa (*Boubou cravate*, 1972; *Pousse-pousse*, 1975) and Jean-Pierre Dikongue-Pipa (*Muna Moto*, 1975; *The Price of Liberty*, 1978). Ghana generated commercial action pictures, while in Zaire *La Vie est belle* (*Life Is Beautiful*, 1986) became a box-office hit by capitalizing on the charisma of music star Papa Wemba.

Some mass-market films, principally from Francophone countries, claimed worldwide attention. Shown at festivals during the 1970s and 1980s, Black African films suggested avenues for a postcolonial cinema. International audiences might miss indigenous details and specific references, but they grasped recurring themes—tradition versus modernity, country versus city, native lore versus Westernized education, and collective values versus individuality. The films posed questions of authorship and "Third cinema" with particular acuteness. And because most directors had been trained in Europe and had grown up watching American films, their works displayed a dynamic interaction between Western filmmaking conventions and explorations of African aesthetic traditions.

One of the most significant traditions was that of oral storytelling. The storyteller, or *griot*, was a central figure in many cultures, and filmmakers modeled their narratives and presentation on oral literature. A film might include a storyteller as a character, as in Fadiko Kramo-Lancine's *Djeli* ("Blood," Ivory Coast, 1981). Or the film might treat the *griot* as an omniscient narrator, as in Ababacar Samb-Makharam's *Jom* ("Dignity," Senegal–West Germany, 1981; **26.2**). Or a film might draw from folklore character types such as the trickster, or plot action such as the initiation or quest. Oumarou Ganda's *The Exiled* (Niger, 1980) links an ambassador's adventures in an episodic folktale pattern.

For the most part, Black African filmmaking since the mid-1970s pursued the themes of political commentary and social criticism characteristic of Third World cinema of the late 1960s. There were comparatively few films of exile, but films dramatizing colonial conflict continued

Jom

26.2 In *Jom*, the griot moves through history, appearing at various moments of crisis to aid his people; here he joins women on their way to force their husbands to join a strike.

Wend Kuuni

26.3 In an instant, a mute boy discovers death, remembers his mother, and regains speech (*Wend Kuuni*).

to be made. Med Hondo's *West Indies* (1979, France–Algeria–Mauritania) staged a music-and-dance treatment of the slave trade (**Color Plate 26.1**). Hondo returned to the continent to film *Sourraouina* (1987, Burkina Faso–Mauritania–France), an epic of anticolonial rebellion. After a ten-year hiatus, Sembène resumed filmmaking with *Camp de Thiaroye* (1987, Senegal; codirected with Thiemo Faty Sow), a drama treating the clash between French and Senegalese infantrymen at the end of World War II.

Studies of contemporary conditions continued as well. Souleymane Cissé's *Finye* (*The Wind*, 1992, Mali) criticized a military regime by dramatizing the growth of student protest. At the climax of the action, a young man's grandfather, committed to ancestral magic, joins the political struggle.

One of the most widely seen films portraying contemporary African life was Désiré Écaré's *Faces of Women* (Ivory Coast, 1985). The film's first story centers on two village women's attempts to outwit their husbands. The film then shifts to present a prosperous, middle-aged city woman seeking to expand her business while taking care of her lazy husband, spoiled daughters, and demanding rural kinfolk. The first story is interrupted by shots of women at a festival commenting on the action, in the manner of oral performance, while in the second story voice-over commentary is supplied by the heroine herself. A witty and ambivalent comment on the contradictions of a developing economy, *Faces of Women* won festival prizes and proved itself commercially viable in Africa and Europe.

Sembène's *Ceddo* (1977; see Black African Cinema p. 487) had helped initiate a "return to the sources" in African film. In the years that followed, many directors sought to portray the distinctive roots of African culture. In Gaston Kaboré's *Wend Kuuni* ("God's Gift," 1982, Burkina Faso), a mute boy is brought back to speech by recalling his traumatic past (**26.3**). The most significant instance of the back-to-the-sources trend, and arguably the most internationally important Black African film since *Ceddo*, was Cissé's *Yeelen* (*Brightness*, aka *The Light*, 1989, Mali–Burkina Faso–France–German–Japan).

Yeelen presents an initiation, a quest, and a duel of dazzling light that determines the fate of history. The plot's elemental symbolism—fire and water, earth and sky, and milk and light—create a filmic equivalent of African oral myth. Cissé shot most scenes in the light of morning, creating golden hues and glowing earth tones which correspond to the central image of "brightness" (**Color Plate 26.2**). Like other films dealing with precolonial history, *Yeelen* calls for a radical transformation of myth and knowledge in order to create a new society.

The 1990s and Beyond

During the 1980s, Black African production remained limited to around ten theatrical features per year, and they did not find the worldwide audience won by African popular music. The next decade saw a major political victory: in 1990, South Africa's long-standing policy of apartheid, officially sanctioned segregation, came to an end, and in 1994 Nelson Mandela became the first Black president. Yet in the same period, much of sub-Saharan Africa was wracked by tribal and civil wars, famines, and genocide, while the HIV virus continued to spread among the population.

On the Festival Circuit Such turmoil kept film production low. Cissé completed only one feature, *Waati* (1995), a coproduction between France and Mali. It told an epic tale of a girl growing up in South Africa, leaving to study a tribe in the Sahara, and coming home after the end of apartheid. Sembène made only two features in the decade, *Guelwaar* (1992, France–Germany–Senegal) and *Faat Kine* (1999, Senegal), which humorously celebrates the resiliency of African women. Faat Kine, helped by her wise mother, raises two children in the absence of her irresponsible husband (**Color Plate 26.3**).

Filmmakers struggled on. Burkina Faso continued to promote pan-African exhibition and distribution with its biannual festival at Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso. The festival had European funding, which also helped establish the first film archive in sub-Saharan Africa, the African Cinémathèque in Ouagadougou. The country also sustained a small production sector, making six films in 1994.

One nation with a developed infrastructure was South Africa, but it was largely devoted to servicing foreign companies filming on location. The enterprising local producer Anant Singh engineered some hits, such as *Sarafina!* (1992), starring Whoopi Goldberg, and *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1995), as well as local comedies. But local feature film production languished until the 2000s, when the government got behind the film business. It created a national film fund, a major bank set up an investment corporation, and new laws offered generous rebates and tax deductions. A modern studio facility was opened as well.

Although much of this largesse flowed to runaway productions such as *Blood Diamond* (2006) and *10,000 BC* (2008), local production grew stronger too. A string of successes brought South African cinema to the world's attention, starting with *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), *U-Carmen eKhayelitsha* (2006), and *Tsotsi* (2005), which won the Foreign Film Academy Award. After making *U-Carmen*, British theater director Mark Donford-May staged *Son of Man* (2006), a modernized version of the story of Jesus, in the townships of Cape Town. In several scenes, government spies videotape incriminating evidence against Jesus (**Color Plate 26.4**). Neill Blomkamp's science-fiction film *District 9* (2009, South Africa–United States–New Zealand–Canada) was a surprise international hit. A group of aliens arrive on a space ship and are immediately confined in a shantytown similar to apartheid-era townships. Much of the funding for these quality productions came from abroad, and the directors were not always of African origin.

Many filmmakers continued a search for an African cinema rooted in tradition. Cheick Oumar Sissoko set the biblical events of *Genesis* (1999, Mali–France) in the awe-inspiring rock formations of the Malian desert. Souleymane Cissé spoke for many in declaring that he wanted "to make films in which the ancient depths of African culture will surge up again. To this end I spend my time visiting old men who tell me stories of the past, true or mythical. A cinema imitating that of America or Europe will be in vain."[1]

Other filmmakers chose to grapple with modern social issues. Sembène's last film before his death, *Moolaadé* (2004), was an attack on female genital mutilation. In Philippe Lacôte's Ivory Coast feature, *Run* (2014), the escape of a young political assassin alternates with flashbacks explaining his past. Algerian director Merzak Allouache, a festival regular since the 1970s, made *The Rooftops* (2013). Structured around the five daily Muslim prayers, it told five contemporary stories of groups of characters, with the entire film staged on rooftops set against the backdrop of Algiers.

In the wrenching *Timbuktu* (2014, Mauritania–France), Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako shows Islamist extremists taking over the ancient regional capital Timbuktu in Mali. The group, flying an ISIL flag and resembling al-Qaeda, imposes harsh punishments on the town's population and on a family of nomadic herders. Because many groups in Africa and the Middle East fly the ISIL flag without being affiliated, Sissako makes the situation represent all such oppression, no matter what country it is. The film's images of the ancient buildings and desert landscapes underline the horror of the oppression visited upon peaceful peoples (**Color Plate 26.5**).

Sissako, like many creators of African films, emigrated to France. Mati Diop was born there, and her family included Djibril Diop Mambéty, Senegalese director of the experimental *Touki Bouki* (1973). While acting in many films, Diop wrote and directed a series of acclaimed shorts. Her feature debut, *Atlantics (*2019) was a drama of separated lovers. The rich cinematography celebrated the magical power of women and culminated in sequences of hallucinatory lyricism (**Color Plate 26.6**). With *Atlantics*, Diop became the first female Black African filmmaker to win the top prize at Cannes.

The Improbable Rise of Nollywood Unlike all its neighbors, Nigeria created a multimillion-dollar filmmaking industry. Even more surprising, the country had almost no movie theaters.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, benefited from an oil boom in the 1970s, but in the decades that followed it was torn by civil wars and ruled by military dictatorships. Not until 1999 did democracy emerge, and the economy and civil society began to rebuild. By the mid-2010s, Nigeria was the continent's biggest economy and one of the world's most prosperous, ahead of Belgium and Taiwan.

Several factors came together to favor filmmaking. The oil boom ended, and in the late 1980s, the local currency was devalued, causing a slump. Crime rose, with people reluctant to leave their homes at night to seek entertainment. Theater troupes folded and TV stations cut back on original programming, throwing many actors out of work. Then a new generation of VHS equipment came on the market, causing dealers to dump outdated cameras and players at cheap prices.

Jealous Lovers

26.4 Shooting in actual homes, cafes, music clubs, and streets, Nollywood productions could attract curious onlookers, as in the background of Adim Williams's romantic melodrama *Jealous Lovers* (2004).

This Is Nollywood

26.5 Posters advertising two Nollywood releases on VCD, *Hidden Truth 2* and *Games Women Play*, around 2005, in a local market (*This Is Nollywood*, 2007).

In 1992, an enterprising trader named Kenneth Nnebue made a VHS film called *Living in Bondage*, about a husband who murders his wife and is haunted by her ghost. The movie sold hugely and launched a wave of video-based production that became known as "Nollywood." The same dealers who sold the equipment—often on the gray market—became "marketers," a combination executive-producer/publicist/distributor. The business grew up informally, with no contracts, no agents, and no protection of copyrights. All funding came through the marketers or whatever the director could scrape together. There was no government regulation, apart from a censorship board. In 1994, three titles were submitted to this board. In 1995, there were 201; by 2010, there were more than 900.

The early films were shot on videocassette. Then digital cameras and computer-based editing took over. There were no studios, so films were made in homes, cafes, offices, and streets (**26.4**). With shooting and postproduction often finished in a month, the style was somewhat casual but drew upon Hollywood continuity style with artificial lighting when necessary (often run off generators due to the unreliable electrical grid).

Most of Africa has never been wired for cable TV, and outside the cities, there were almost no theaters. Nollywood films were released on the local home-video format, the VCD, a low-end forerunner of the DVD. The discs were sold directly to consumers in traditional stalls in open-air markets (**26.5**) and enjoyed at home or in little open-air theaters with a TV screen and an entrance fee of the equivalent of a dime.

No official figures were kept, but by the early 2010s estimates of the industry's income ran from $600 million to $5 billion. Some films were in regional languages such as Hausa and Yoruba, while many of the most popular were in English, which allowed them to circulate through much of Africa and to viewers overseas.

The success of Nollywood enabled its most prominent directors, including Emem Isong, Tunde Kelani, and Kunle Afolayan, to raise their budgets. By working outside the sometimes shady world of the marketers, they became known as "New Nollywood." Kelani formed his own company, Mainframe Films and Television Productions, and sought to highlight local culture by adapting Yoruba literary works.

Afolayan made *October 1* (2014) on an unheard-of budget of $2 million. Support came from the government and product-placement deals, including scenes featuring bottles of Guinness stout. Set just before the day of the country's independence in 1960, *October 1* follows an elderly police inspector's search for a serial killer. After four months of preproduction, including the creation of historical costumes and props, the film was shot with a professional digital camera and won spots at film festivals. While African audiences recognized the higher quality of the New Nollywood films, they happily watched cheaper titles too. As one observer remarked, "It's the only film industry in the world that's completely controlled by Black people."[2]

Nollywood proved a model for other countries. Much of Africa moved toward an exhibition system based on home and mobile entertainment. Production of features on video emerged in Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, and elsewhere. Direct sales on VCD continued to dominate the market, but as the Internet penetrated the continent, streaming became important as well. With cheap tablets and phones now available and mobile e-payments spreading, people could access video-on-demand services. Netflix arrived and established a dedicated server for Nigeria, while companies specializing in African films started streaming throughout the continent.

Bypassing theatrical screenings, Africa developed a system in which viewers at home or on the move could watch hundreds of films, many produced by local people drawing upon their own cultures. The indigenous African film that the pioneers had dreamed of arrived thanks to digital video.

FILMMAKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST

For nearly fifty years, Middle Eastern politics were dominated by the friction between Israel and the Arab states. Hostilities intensified after Israel's victory in a 1967 war with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. The Yom Kippur War of 1973 pitted Egypt and Syria against Israel. US President Jimmy Carter coaxed Egypt and Israel to accept a peace plan in 1979, but the assassination of Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat in 1981, as well as Israel's refusal to cede captured territory, assured continued conflict in the region.

From the 1960s to the present, Palestinian exiles and those living in occupied territories within Israel fought for an autonomous homeland. Most Arab nations remained neutral or hostile. Palestinian militants in the West Bank and Lebanon continued their fight into the 2010s, while Israel refused to grant Palestine its own territory.

The cinemas of the region were very diverse. Egypt, Iran, and Turkey had mid-size industries, regionally exporting comedies, musicals, action pictures, and melodramas. Other nations' governments created film production that would promote indigenous cultural traditions. Some filmmakers aligned themselves with "Third Cinema" developments (see Argentina: Third Cinema p. 482), but after the mid-1970s many undertook to broaden their audiences, participating in the international art cinema of the West. In the new century, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait, which had had no traditions of filmmaking, began investing in Hollywood projects, hosting overseas productions, and launching splashy film festivals.

Israel and Palestine

In the era after its founding in 1948, Israel was a prosperous country and the Middle East's only democracy, but it had a very small film industry. In the 1960s, Menahem Golan and his cousin Yoram Globus began producing musicals, spy films, melodramas, and the ethnic romantic comedies known as *bourekas*. During the 1970s, Israel also hosted a "young cinema" that focused on psychological problems of the middle classes. In 1979, the Ministry of Education and Culture created the Israel Quality Film Fund (shortened to Israel Film Fund in 1999), thus stimulating low-budget films of personal reflection, such as Dan Wolman's *Hide and Seek* (1980), or political inquiries, notably Daniel Wachsmann's *Transit* (1980). Soon the Quality fund was supporting about half of the fifteen or so features produced annually. It also encouraged foreign companies to invest in internationally oriented projects.

Throughout the 1990s, Israeli production averaged around ten films a year. The government slashed the budget of the Quality Film Fund in 1996, and many filmmakers sought work in television. By 1999, local films attracted only 1 percent of the national box office, most of the rest going to American imports. But in 2001, a Cinema Law allocated 50 percent of television licensing fees to the Israel Film Fund. Although local films' share of the domestic market scarcely grew, the new support gradually boosted output to around 30 features a year by the mid-2010s.

New funding policies were established, including a 2008 tax benefit for foreign investments and coproductions. Like much of the Middle East, Israel became dependent on coproductions. Soon 40 percent of the money going into Israeli films came from abroad. Israeli TV channels were also required to buy broadcast rights to local films in advance. Such support helped more prestigious films gain acceptance in foreign festivals and international markets.

The most prominent Israeli filmmaker, the documentarist Amos Gitai, ran afoul of government support. With funding from Canal Plus and other foreign sources, he made documentaries and fiction films that commented critically on Israeli history and society. Adhering to a long-take style, Gitai set himself against popular tastes and official policy. His *Kadosh* (1999) was the first Israeli film to compete at the Cannes Film Festival in twenty-five years, but the Fund refused to reimburse its share of the costs. *Kippur* (2000), Gitai's graphic drama of helicopter rescue teams in the Yom Kippur War (**26.6**), was denied government funding and was not released in Israel. *Rabin, the Last Day* (2015) explored the causes of the 1995 assassination of moderate Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Kippur

26.6 In a remarkable 7½-minute take in *Kippur*, four increasingly desperate members of a rescue team manhandle a wounded soldier through deep mud.

Government pressure steered filmmakers away from overtly political subjects toward a more general humanism with overseas appeal. The first international success of the 2000s was *The Band's Visit* (2007), TV director Eran Kolirin's gently comic first feature. In a geometrical, Tati-like style, it presents an evening of fraternization between a stranded Egyptian police band and the residents of a small Israeli town. In 2008, Ari Folman's animated documentary recalling his military service during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, *Waltz with Bashir* (see Cutting the Tie to Photography: Animated Documentary p. 538), gained even greater attention.

Israeli films became staples at film festivals worldwide. Samuel Moaz's *Lebanon* (2009), another personal recollection of the 1982 invasion, confined its camera almost entirely to the interior of a tank (**Color Plate 26.7**). In 2017, he followed up with *Foxtrot*, moving between the viewpoints of a young soldier's parents and the soldier on duty in a desolate checkpoint. The ironic twists in the plot underscore the oppressiveness of Israel's military stance. Criticizing the film, the Minister of Culture threatened to change funding procedures for local productions.

Joseph Cedar's *Footnote* (2011) was a droll comedy in the vein of the Coen brothers, with father–son Talmudic scholars involved in jealousies and misunderstandings about an academic prize. Yossi Madmoni also explored father–son relations in *Restoration* (2011), about a man trying to sell off prize items in his father's bankrupt furniture-restoration studio, and in *A Place in Heaven* (2013), in which a secular military hero comes into conflict with his strictly religious son. By the mid-2010s, Israel's industry remained small, but its films had gained a respectable 12 percent of the national box office.

As a result of the ongoing intifada by Palestinians against Israel, there was no organized Palestinian industry. As citizens, Palestinian filmmakers could apply for Israeli Film Fund support, but starting in 2015, they were required to identify their films as Israeli. Arab nations were reluctant to finance or import films made by Palestinians living in Israel, and other investment came primarily from outside the region. For example, Najwa Najjar's *Eyes of a Thief* (2014) was a French–Palestinian–Algerian–Swedish–German coproduction.

Elia Suleiman was the most noted Palestinian filmmaker. While living in New York, he obtained Israeli, US, and European money to commence an autobiographical trilogy tracing the dispossession of the Palestinian people since the founding of Israel. The first entry, *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1996), was a wry quasi-documentary look at life for Palestinians in Nazareth and Jerusalem. *Divine Intervention* (2002) was a comedy on the unlikely topic of Israeli–Palestinian tensions in East Jerusalem and Ramallah. In one scene, the hero lets a balloon with Yassir Arafat's face on it float across the border and the Israeli guards debate whether to shoot it down (**Color Plate 26.8**). Suleiman completed his trilogy with *The Time That Remains: Chronicle of a Present Absentee* (2009), based on his father's diaries, and he followed with *It Must Be Heaven* (2018), a melancholy comedy about his efforts to make a film about exile. The project was refused because "it isn't Palestinian enough."

Egypt

Egyptian cinema's golden age stretched from the 1940s to the early 1960s, with around a hundred films produced annually. These were popular at home and in Arabic-speaking countries. In the early 1960s, however, "Hollywood on the Nile," was put under government control. Production declined, though occasional outstanding films appeared. Chadi Abdel Salam's *The Mummy* (aka *The Night of Counting the Years*, 1969) was based on a true story of thieves discovering a cache of pharaohs' mummies and burial goods in nineteenth-century Luxor.

Production in the 1970s and 1980s was dominated by genre films, though during the 1990s, some art films for festivals and export appeared. Production slumped, with only sixteen features released in 1997. There were few European coproductions, though entertainment conglomerates in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates invested in Egyptian production, distribution, and exhibition.

Throughout this era, the most famous filmmaker remained the veteran Youssef Chahine. An early proponent of President Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism, Chahine examined modern Egyptian history from a critical perspective. *The Sparrow* (1973) interrogates the causes of Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war. Later, his films became at once more personal and more transnational. *Alexandria, Why?* (1978) intercuts events of 1942 with Hollywood films of the era; in *Memory* (1982), a filmmaker facing a heart operation recalls his career over thirty years. Both films are autobiographical, but Chahine joined many political filmmakers in seeking a broader audience with intimate dramas. Chahine continued to direct up to his death in 2008, offering festivals such films as *The Emigrant* (1994) and *Silence . . . We're Rolling* (2001), another film about moviemaking.

New production companies, financing from satellite TV, and the spread of multiplexes reinvigorated the industry. In 2006, the domestic multimedia conglomerate, the Good News Group, moved into cinema. Its first film, Marwan Hamed's *The Yacoubian Building* (2006), was the most expensive Egyptian film yet made. Based on a controversial novel, it links rich people living inside an apartment house to the poor people living in tiny storerooms on the roof (**26.7**). Its soap-opera plot commingles an aging

The Yacoubian Building

26.7 The aging playboy and the still-idealistic shopgirl embrace beneath the Yacoubian Building (*The Yacoubian Building*).

playboy, an innocent young woman, a gay journalist, a drug dealer, and a boy driven to terrorism. Financing other successful productions and buying scores of theaters, Good News was credited with a box-office upturn. In 2007, production rose to forty features.

Apart from Hollywood films, the release schedules were dominated by slapstick comedies and melodramas. A cycle starring local comedian Mohamed Saad yielded record box-office returns, while European coproductions increased. Filmmakers adopted the free-camera technique (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 565) to shoot socially critical dramas as well. *Cairo 678* (2010) examined sexual harassment of women, while *Asmaa* (2011) dramatized a controversy in which doctors refuse to treat woman with HIV.

The industry's growth was cut short by the Egyptian Revolution of January 2011. With protests and riots in the streets came a curfew, and theaters shut down. Even when they reopened, patrons boycotted films with stars perceived to be hostile to the Revolution. Production plunged to twenty films in 2011. Documentary records of the Revolution appeared, including Jehane Noujaim's *The Square* (2013–2014), financed in part on Kickstarter. The film follows a small group of dedicated protesters and includes powerful footage of attacks by the military on the crowds in Tahrir Square. Noujaim updated the film to cover the huge protests in 2013 that led to the ouster of Muslim Brotherhood-supported President Mohamed Morsi.

Production was recovering and Egyptian features were winning three-quarters of the domestic market. Films about the Revolution included the critically acclaimed *Nawara* (2015), focused on a maid working for a rich family. In *Clash* (2016), director Mohamed Diab depicts one day of the June 2013 protests that ended in the coup to remove Morsi. The camera is confined to the interior of a police truck containing 25 prisoners of various political stripes. Diab staged huge riots in the streets of Cairo, all seen through the truck's windows and door (**Color Plate 26.9**).

Film culture revived as well. The Masr Dot Bokra Film Festival was launched in 2015. Working with inexpensive digital equipment, young filmmakers could win grants and have their work shown in theaters and online. Two years later the El Gouna Film Festival began as a showcase for international art cinema, while offering a forum for regional filmmakers to seek funding for their projects.

Turkey

Turkish cinema came to international notice in the late 1960s with such films as Yilmaz Güney's *Umut* (see Political Filmmaking in the Third World p. 475). Turkey already boasted the highest output in the region. Erotic films, comedies, historical epics, melodramas, and even Westerns sold more than 100 million tickets per year. But production and attendance were already declining when a military contingent seized power in 1980.

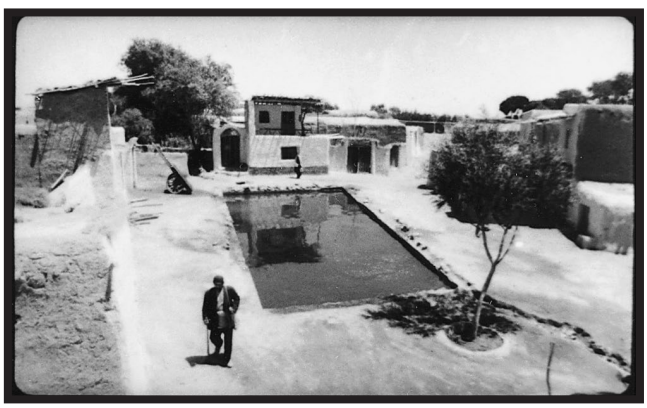
The new government included film directors on its enemies list, and Güney was the obvious target. A popular actor who had become a left-wing sympathizer, he fell under suspicion in the mid-1970s. When the military took power, Güney was already serving a twenty-four-year prison sentence. While incarcerated, he wrote scripts that were filmed by others. The most famous of these, *Yol* (*The Way*, 1982), follows five prisoners given a week's release to visit their families; its forlorn landscapes hint at the oppressiveness of contemporary Turkey (**Color Plate 26.10**). In 1981, Güney escaped to France, where he made his last film. *The Wall* (1983) is a bitter indictment of a prison system that oppresses men, women, and children alike. The prison wall, filmed in different sorts of light and weather, becomes an ominous presence throughout. When Güney died in 1984, the Turkish government sought to erase every trace of him, including burning all his films.

Despite stifling censorship, the film industry gradually rebuilt itself, and production grew to almost 200 films. Only half of these, however, would get released to theaters; the rest were destined for the increasingly powerful video market. At the same time, the government sought to attract Western capital, and US releases reappeared in theaters in the late 1980s. Their grip on the market drove production down to a mere twenty-five films in 1992, most made with European cofinancing.

During the 1990s, Turkey gradually liberalized, hoping to be the only Muslim country to join the European Union. In 1990, it joined Eurimages, the European agency for supporting cinema, and Turkish cinema became more

Distant

26.8 *Distant*: a staircase encounter staged in a manner reminiscent of Antonioni (16.4).



Gaav

26.9 The regional realism of *Gav*: Hassan returns to his village, unaware that his beloved cow has died.

dependent on coproductions. In 1993, censorship was all but abolished. In 1998, *Yol* finally received a commercial release in Turkey. Production continued to fall, however, and in 2004, when only sixteen films were made, the Ministry of Culture started providing some financing.

By 2000, a young generation of directors was emerging. Several of them collaborated on the fanciful network narrative *Istanbul Tales* (2005), which presents intersecting stories based on Snow White, Cinderella, and other fairy tales. More demanding was the work of Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Ceylan won international acclaim with *Distant* (2002), an austere story of cousins reuniting in Istanbul and trying to reconcile. The use of nonprofessional performers and the director's apartment as the basic locale recalls Italian Neorealism, but the silences and the spare, static long takes continue minimalist trends of the 1970s (**26.8**).

Climates (2006), *Three Monkeys* (2008), *Winter Sounds* (2014), *The Wild Pear Tree* (2018), and especially *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* (2011) confirmed Ceylan's reputation as the most prominent Turkish filmmaker since Güney. In *Once Upon a Time*, provincial officials roam the countryside with a confessed murderer who has forgotten where he buried his victim. Petty incompetence and incongruous conversations create subtle comedy during a grim investigation. In keeping with the "contemplative cinema" trend (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 565), Ceylan holds widescreen panoramas while people and vehicles move slowly through the barren, rolling landscapes (**Color Plate 26.11**).

By 2015, thanks to government funding and new theaters in shopping malls, the industry had improved its prospects dramatically. Production rose to more than 138 features, which accounted for a remarkable 60 percent of domestic box office. Coproductions continued to be important, as when Eurimages contributed to feminist Deniz Gamze Ergüran's *Mustang* (2015), about the repressive treatment of five sisters in a rural Turkish town. But a coup attempt that year was violently put down by the government, making support for the film industry uncertain. Filmmakers turned to private funding, money from abroad, and, for smaller projects, crowdfunding Internet sites.

Iran: Revolution, Renaissance, and Retreat

Filmmakers fell under more severe political constraints in Iran. In 1979, a revolt drove the Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty out of Iran, and the Ayatollah Khomeini took over the government. While Khomeini was consolidating an Islamic state, his country was attacked by Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein. The war (1980–1988) proved costly for Iran. Khomeini's leadership was shaken and Saddam gained stature.

Under the Shah, Tehran had boasted a major film festival and a commercial industry releasing up to seventy films a year. In the early 1970s, this mass-entertainment cinema was counterbalanced by a New Iranian Cinema, exemplified by such films as Dariush Mehrjui's *Gav* ("The Cow," 1969; **26.9**). Some directors left the film workers' union to establish the New Film Group, which received limited government funding. Mehrjui's *The Cycle* (1976) and Bahman Farmanara's *Tall Shadows of the Wind* (1978) were among several films criticizing social conditions and even attacking the Shah's secret police.

After Khomeini's revolution, many filmmakers went into exile. Only about a hundred features were made between 1979 and 1985. Censorship, confined largely to political topics under the Shah, now also focused on sexual display and Western influences. Foreign films were cut and then banned altogether.

Iran's theocracy condemned many Western traditions, but Khomeini's officials believed that cinema could build support for the regime. The government continued the Fajr International Film Festival (first held in 1983), and it financed filmmaking that reflected official views on Iranian culture and the Shi'ite Muslim tradition. The

Farabi Cinema Foundation, established in 1983, offered financing for directors' first films. Under a new generation of filmmakers, production rose steadily.

Most important was the Children and Young Adults' Unit of the Farabi Cinema Foundation. Films about children could attract a large audience in a nation in which nearly half the population was younger than the age of fifteen. Some of Iran's most talented directors turned to stories centered on young people, which were less vulnerable to censorship. Soon a series of imaginative, affecting Iranian films appeared at overseas film festivals.

The first filmmaker to gain wide acclaim was the veteran Abbas Kiarostami, who had cofounded the Children and Young Adults' Unit. *Where Is the Friend's Home*? (1987), an unpretentious but surprisingly suspenseful story of a child searching for his classmate in a neighboring village, aroused foreign viewers' interest in Iranian cinema (**Video 26.1**). Kiarostami's sequel, *And Life Goes On* (1992), shows a film director and his son driving through the regions devastated by the 1991 earthquake, searching for the boy who had performed in the previous film. Kiarostami uses offscreen action to dedramatize the quake's horror and display the determination of the survivors, as when the son pours a drink for an unseen baby in a nearby vehicle (**Color Plate 26.12**).

Kiarostami completed this boxes-within-boxes trilogy in 1994 with *Through the Olive Trees*, dealing with a movie crew making *And Life Goes On* in the earthquake region. In one humorously maddening scene, multiple takes of a shot are spoiled when the young actress refuses to speak to the actor who is courting her in real life (**26.10**). Kiarostami went on to deal with the forbidden subject of suicide in *Taste of Cherry*, the 1997 Palme d'Or-winner at the Cannes Film Festival. His *The Wind Will Carry Us* (1999) took another media professional on a contemplative, faintly comic journey into the countryside. By the early 1990s, Kiarostami was obtaining his funding from outside Iran.

Through the Olive Trees

26.10 In *Through the Olive Trees*, tensions between local nonactors repeatedly ruin a simple scene.

Jafar Panahi, who had assisted on *Through the Olive Trees*, directed his first feature, *The White Balloon* (1995), from Kiarostami's script. Coaxing a remarkable performance from the child lead, Panahi cast her sister in *The Mirror* (1997), about a little girl navigating Tehran traffic alone to make her way home from school. Along with *Where Is the Friend's Home?*, such films established the "child quest" genre, in which a determined child doggedly overcomes obstacles.

Like Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf had been directing since the 1970s. His international breakthrough was *Salaam Cinema* (1995), a good-humored documentary about film fans. His many lyrical films include *Moment of Innocence* (1996), a gripping film about the ways in which romance disrupts filmmaking; *Gabbeh* (1996), a mystical drama about a weaver of Persian carpets; and the rapturous *The Silence* (1998), centered on a blind boy who must find a job.

In 1996, Makhmalbaf formed the Makhmalbaf Film House, a school for young filmmakers. It quickly became a production house for members of his family. In 1997, his seventeen-year-old daughter Samira directed *The Apple*, using him as scriptwriter and editor. Basing her film on an actual couple who had never let their two twelve-year-old daughters out of the house, Samira Makhmalbaf guided the family and social workers to reenact their story with remarkable naturalness (**Color Plate 26.13**). *Blackboards* (2000) used mostly nonactors to portray unemployed teachers on the roads near the Iraqi border, struggling to educate refugees. Mohsen Makhmalbaf's wife, Marzieh Meshkini, worked as assistant director to her daughter and then took up directing herself with *The Day I Became a Woman* (2000), examining three generations of Iranian women.

In comparison to its Middle Eastern neighbors, Iran sustained a robust film industry. The government banned imported films, turning the market over to local releases. While in 1980, the year after the downfall of the Shah, only twenty-eight features were made, by 2001 the number had risen to eighty-seven and by the mid-2010s to more than a hundred. Most of these were melodramas, crime films, and historical pageants. Foreign films were technically limited to festivals, though bootleg videos of popular hits, mostly from Hollywood, circulated privately.

Films for international export, such as those by Kiarostami, Panahi, and the Makhmalbaf clan, were seldom screened domestically. The authorities were pleased, however, by the positive image of Iran that they created abroad. The Farabi Cinema Foundation closely tracked films and directors' careers, ranking them by their successes at festivals and promoting them with an English language magazine, *Film International*. More money was poured into production. The average feature's budget rose

from $11,000 in 1990 to $200,000 in 1998, though still absurdly low by Western standards.

In 1997, Iran elected a relatively liberal president, Mohammad Khatami. As a former minister of culture, he had helped filmmakers achieve some freedom. He sought to open Iran to a dialogue with the West, and he loosened censorship and bureaucratic supervision of scripts. Iranian films continued to win international prizes, and new talent came to the fore.

After *The Wind Will Carry Us*, Kiarostami declared that he would step aside in favor of a younger generation and would shoot only on video. The more political Mohsen Makhmalbaf, who was appalled by the draconian rule of the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan, filmed *Kandahar* there. Released to international success in 2000, it exposed the horrific conditions encountered by an émigré woman trying to find her sister. Makhmalbaf decided to stay in Afghanistan and help in building schools and hospitals. His family joined him and made films about the country's plight: Samira's *At Five in the Afternoon* (2003); Marzieh Meshkini's second feature, *Stray Dogs* (2004); and eighteen-year-old daughter Hana's first feature, *Buddha Collapsed Out of Shame* (2007).

Emerging filmmakers moved away from the prototypical "Iranian" films of Kiarostami and Makhmalbaf. As director Bahman Ghobadi put it: "Too many people just imitate the greats like Kiarostami. One or two imitations is all right, but so many is senseless."[3] Ghobadi made child quest stories that were emphatically not heartwarming. *A Time for Drunken Horses* (2000) and *Turtles Can Fly* (2004) showed the grim lives of children struggling during war. Mani Haghighi's *Men at Work* (2006) takes a different approach, dealing in comic fashion with four men's absurd decision to try to topple a huge rock they notice beside a road. Panahi, who had made *The White Balloon* and *The Mirror*, also turned to comedy in *Offside* (2006). The film centers on a group of young women determined to see a soccer game despite a men-only policy in the stadium. The aggressive girls, tricking the guards keeping them corralled outside, were a far cry from the waifs of the child quest-genre.

The most internationally prominent Iranian director who began filmmaking in the 2000s was Asghar Farhadi. He avoided political subject matter in favor of subtle, complex dramas about flawed but well-meaning people whose errors, misunderstandings, and small lies snowball into crises. *Fireworks Wednesday* (2006) shows a maid embroiled in her middle-class employers' fraught marriage, while in *About Elly* (2009), a guest at a seaside picnic disappears, testing the moral responsibility of the group. Farhadi's delicate *A Separation* (2011) was the first Iranian film to win a foreign language Oscar, a feat that he repeated with *The Salesman* (2016). Farhadi frequently shoots with telephoto lenses and keeps multiple faces visible, inviting us to observe his characters from a distance and read their thoughts in their expressions (**Color Plate 26.14**).

Under Mohammad Khatami, the years from 2002 to 2004 stabilized and opened up the industry, but the situation changed when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a right-wing isolationist, was elected president in 2005. Strict censorship was reinstated, with some films, including Panahi's *Offside*, being banned. Filmmakers were encouraged to keep submitting their work to festivals abroad, but they were ordered to avoid stylistic experiment and stick to national social and Islamic issues. Several filmmakers faced exile or worse.

In response to Ahmadinejad's election, Makhmalbaf and his family stayed out of Iran, living in exile. Kiarostami, who had long been working wholly with European backing, continued to live in Iran but made most of his films abroad until his death in 2016. These included the playfully ambiguous study of a relationship in *Certified Copy* (2010), shot in Italy, and his penultimate feature, *Like Someone in Love* (2012), a French–Japanese coproduction shot in Japan. Ghobadi also went into voluntary exile, making films in Turkey, Iraq, and Mexico.

Panahi elected to stay in Iran, but he was arrested in 2010, accused of making films against the government. Sentenced to six years in prison and forbidden to make films, give interviews, and travel abroad for twenty years, he appealed his sentence and shot *This Is Not a Film* (2011) in his Tehran apartment (**26.11**). The government did not put him in prison, perhaps fearing a repeat of the international outcry that had greeted his arrest, and he made two further films about his situation, *Closed Curtain* (2013) and *Taxi* (2015).

Panahi's younger colleague Mohammad Rasoulof (*The White Meadows*, 2009; *Manuscripts Don't Burn*, 2013) was arrested at the same time, but his sentence was reduced to one year, which he was not made to serve. Unfazed, he went on to make *A Man of Integrity* (2017),

This Is Not a Film

26.11 Forbidden to shoot an actual film, Jafar Panahi lays out an imaginary set diagram and describes action in his script. *This Is Not a Film* was smuggled to the Cannes Film Festival on a hard drive hidden in a cake.

which provoked authorities to confiscate his passport. After moving his wife and daughter to Europe for their safety, he persisted. *There Is No Evil* (2020) won the top prize at the Berlin Film Festival, but he was not permitted to attend to accept the award.

Rasoulof's challenge to the regime echoed that of many other film personnel. Actors and directors mobilized to challenge the government's violent suppression of street protests. Growing censorship, economic pressures, and official handling of the coronavirus pandemic brought the Iranian film community into defiant unity. "Filmmakers," noted one observer, "are trying to address the collective trauma that everyone has experienced."[4]

Countries in Conflict

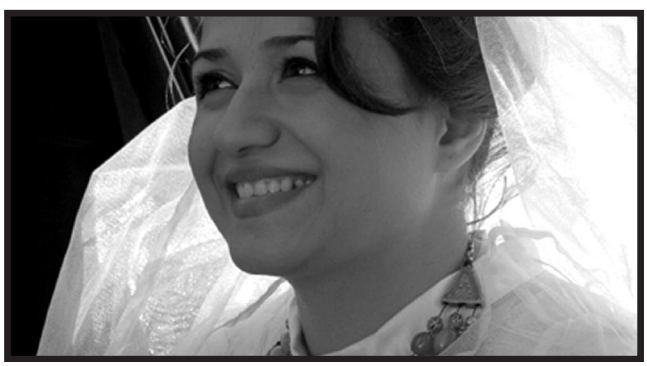
Iraq Iraq's cinema was a minor presence in the region, but in the 1980s, dictator Saddam Hussein bid for leadership of the Arab community. He launched a patriotic film program and invited Arab filmmakers to work on big-budget features, notably the $15 million battle epic *Al-Qadissa* (1981). Directed by the Egyptian veteran Salah Abou Seif, it utilized a crew drawn from all over the Middle East. In celebrating a seventh-century Iraqi victory over Persian forces, *Al-Qadissa* suggests parallels to Saddam's war with Iran. His next military venture, against Kuwait in 1990, provoked a Western coalition to drive his forces back across the border. Iraq faced a decade of international sanctions, and filmmaking went into decline.

Claiming erroneously that Saddam was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction, the United States led a coalition that toppled his regime in 2003. He was executed in 2006. In the meantime, the country had descended into civil war, with Muslim factions and ethnic groups attacking one another and the occupying forces.

Despite nearly constant large-scale violence, a few directors managed to make films. In *Underexposed* (2003), the first post-Saddam feature, Oday Rasheed provided a slightly fictionalized account of his and his neighbors' lives during the conflict. Mohamed al-Daradji, educated in England and living in the Netherlands, spent years filming *Ahlaam* ("Dreams," 2006). Shooting in the streets of Baghdad, al-Daradji's team was kidnapped by Iraqi factions believing them to be spies, and they were shot at by American troops. *Ahlaam* portrays the American invasion through the experiences of characters connected with an insane asylum that is struck during the bombing. The heroine, Ahlaam, has become insane after her fiancé is kidnapped at their wedding, and the film alternates scenes of the wandering asylum inmates with flashbacks to Ahlaam's wedding preparations (**26.12**). There were no theaters left open in Iraq, but al-Daradji managed screenings in festivals and foreign arthouses.

Afghanistan Between 1994 and 1996, the Taliban, a militant Sunni Muslim movement originating along Pakistan's border, seized control of most of Afghanistan. It ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, imposing a strict interpretation of Islamic law. Massacres targeted ethnic groups, women suffered brutal repression, and virtually all forms of artistic expression were banned. Filmmaking and exhibition disappeared.

In 2001, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, allied with Afghani tribes, drove out the Taliban, though it continued as an insurgent force. Filmmaking was slow to recover. Siddiq Barmak, who had directed his first film, *Bigana*, in 1987, was not able to complete another until *Osama* (2003). Set during the Taliban's rule, it centers on a girl who must dress as a boy to make a living for her widowed mother (**26.13**). The Iranian family of Mohsen Makhmalbaf, based in Afghanistan for two years, invested in the project and loaned equipment for Barmak's next film, *Opium War* (2008). By making their films in and about Afghanistan, the Makhmalbafs helped the Afghani industry make tentative steps toward recovery.



Ahlaam

26.12 Ahlaam shortly before the violent disruption of her wedding (*Ahlaam*).

Osama

26.13 The young heroine, disguised as a boy, and her mother face intimidation and danger each time they venture into the street (*Osama*).

SOUTH AMERICA AND MEXICO: INTERRUPTED REFORMS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH HOLLYWOOD

During the 1970s, military governments took power in much of South and Central America. Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina fell under dictatorships. After 1978, pluralist democracy returned to most countries, but the new governments faced colossal inflation rates, declining productivity, and huge foreign indebtedness. The IMF imposed austerity measures on Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. During the first half of the 1990s, inflation was brought down to more reasonable levels, and film production recovered somewhat.

Middle Eastern countries had been fairly insulated from Hollywood takeovers, by self-imposed isolation, as in Iran, or by having a fairly strong local industry, as in Egypt and Turkey. But Latin America's screens had been dominated by US cinema since World War I. The region's film output had grown significantly between 1965 and 1975, but because most right-wing governments provided little protection against imports, productivity declined steadily over the next decade.

Occasionally, however, local industries gained strength, and some filmmakers won a place on the international art-cinema circuit. Moreover, during the 1990s, construction of multiplexes increased the total number of screens in the top Latin American territories. The spread of theaters continued during the 2000s, with Mexico, the top market, having 6,225 screens by 2016. This growth boosted attendance and justified increasing ticket prices.

Beyond national boundaries, the market was ripe for access. New investment flowed in. In 1996, the Motion Picture Association of America set up an office, the Motion Picture Association-América Latina. In 1999, Disney/Buena Vista International bought a 30 percent share in the Argentine company Patagonik, which became the largest producing firm in Latin America. Other major American studios joined the effort. 20th Century Fox helped finance the Mexican international hit Alfonso Cuarón's *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001) by prebuying the distribution rights for Mexico and several other countries. Joshua Marston's *Maria Full of Grace* (2004), which achieved American distribution and an Oscar nomination for its lead actress, was a US–Colombian coproduction.

Counterbalancing Hollywood's presence in the market was Ibermedia. Created in 1997, this consortium fostered coproductions among Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela. It aimed to bring films to the international Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking audience, 450 million strong. Thanks to US investment and the Ibermedia program, coproductions became central to Latin American filmmaking.

Hollywood firms were chiefly interested in domestic and regional markets. Diego Lerner, president of the Walt Disney Company Latin America, specified: "Our objective is to break even in the local country and skim off profits from international sales."[5] The studios imported relatively few Latin American films to the United States. In 2000, Patagonik produced a tricky heist film, Fabián Bielinsky's *Nine Queens*, and Buena Vista International released it in Argentina, but sold it to Sony for its mildly successful release in the United States.

By 2006, powerful American firms were circulating films throughout the continent. Filmmakers feared that Hollywood participation diluted the films' local flavor, but they also recognized that regional export enabled the films to be profitable and to achieve an international profile. Meanwhile, producers also arrange for joint financing on their own, as with Lucía Cedrón's *Lamb of God* (2008), an Argentine–French–Chilean project. There was now a unified Latin American film market, one that could help films pay for themselves.

Brazil

By 1973, guerrillas had lost their struggle against Brazil's military government (see Coups and the Cinema p. 417). A year later, General Ernesto Geisel assumed the presidency and promised greater openness. In 1975, Embrafilme, originally a state distribution agency, was reorganized to create a vertically integrated monopoly over Brazilian cinema. The government also increased the screen quota, which cut down imports and created a demand for domestic films.

Embrafilme worked with independent producers and courted television and foreign countries for coproductions. Embrafilme's efforts helped double attendance and raise production to a level of sixty to eighty films per year. The agency's powers increased under the transition to democratic constitutional rule. Embrafilme was even able to support the controversial *Pixote* (1980), which presented an unflattering portrait of life in Brazil's cities.

The veterans of Cinema Nôvo (see Brazil: Cinema Nôvo p. 415) retained their central roles in Brazilian film culture. Embrafilme was headed by two Cinema Nôvo directors: Roberto Farias and Carlos Diegues. Like their peers elsewhere, Brazil's director relinquished political militancy and formal experimentation in the name of more accessible storytelling strategies. Many directors, from Brazil and elsewhere on the continent, affiliated their works with the Latin American literature of "Magical Realism" (see Latin American Literature and Cinema box).

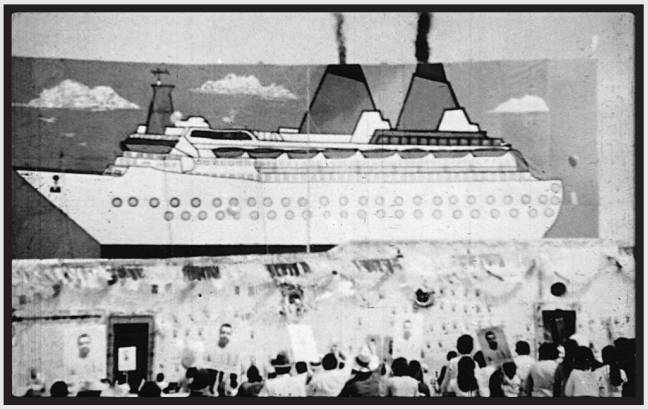
LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CINEMA

During the 1960s, Latin American writing became renowned throughout the world. The Mexican Carlos Fuentes (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, 1962), the Argentine Julio Cortázar (*Hopscotch*, 1963), the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa (*The Green House*, 1966), and the Colombian Gabriel García Marquez (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1967) had forged a literature that mingled European influences with indigenous cultural sources.

Working in a vein of Magical Realism (*lo real maravilloso*), these writers spiced social realism with myth, fantasy, and fairy tales. Episodic folktale plots might turn suddenly into symbolic labyrinths, full of images as disconcerting as those of European Surrealism. Although the Surrealists sought the liberation of the individual psyche, the fantastic imagery of Magical Realism sought to reflect the collective imagination of colonized peoples, for whom everyday reality seemed only one step away from the supernatural.

Latin American filmmaking had already been influenced by this strain in literature, as when Brazilian films took inspiration from the tropicalism of the prewar period (see Tropicalism and Cannibalism p. 418). During the 1980s, filmmakers began to develop the Magical Realist trend further. Often this involved adapting literary works, as in the six-part series *Difficult Loves* (1988); each film was derived from a story by García Marquez and signed by a major director from a different country. Other directors opted for more original mixtures of realism and fantasy, as in Eliseo Subiela's Borgesian *Conquest of Paradise* (1981, Argentina) and *Man Looking Southeast* (1986).

A key example of Magical Realist film is Ruy Guerra's *Erendira* (1982), with a script by García Marquez. The beautiful Erendira undergoes a series of grotesque adventures, mostly involving the efforts of her Gorgon-like grandmother to gain money from prostituting the girl. They travel across a vaguely modern Latin America, teeming with smugglers, corrupt police, and cynical politicians. Their home is a vast circus tent, housing statues, a huge boat, and a labyrinth of veiled and curtained corridors. The film leaps from the brutality of Erendira's exploitation to lyrical fantasy: handbills turn into birds, blue fish swim through the air, and a political rally becomes a fairy-tale spectacle (**26.14**).



Erendira

26.14 Senator Onesimo's campaign is adorned by a huge billboard ship that mysteriously spouts smoke (*Erendira*).

The exchange between film and fiction flowed both ways. Latin American writers drew on popular cinema. Gabriel Cabrera Infante's novels sought to capture the raucous vulgarity of movies. Manuel Puig's novel *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1976) took plots from Hollywood B-pictures; the process of appropriation came full circle when the film version was released in 1985. Latin American cinema won a place in world film culture partly through its ties with a prestigious literary trend.

Other directors adapted to an international market. Carlos Diegues's *Bye Bye Brazil* (1980), dedicated "To the Brazilian people of the 21st Century," found success abroad. A tale of an itinerant sideshow troupe drifting through a poverty-stricken country full of discos, brothels, boomtowns, and TV antennas, the film had a boisterousness and sentiment reminiscent of the early Fellini (**26.15**). Another lucrative export was Bruno Barretto's *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* (1976), in which a man who returns from the dead shares his wife's bed with her second husband. After the success of *Pixote*, Hector Babenco won US backing for *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985).

Embrafilme went bankrupt in 1988 and was closed in 1990. A mere nine features were released the following year. From the 1990s on, when Brazil recovered from a bout of hyperinflation, things improved. The spread of multiplexes provided a larger audience and higher ticket prices, and the government contributed to the recovery in production with state subsidies, tax credits for investors,

Bye Bye Brazil

26.15 Salomé in *Bye Bye Brazil* examines the Indians' totem, which suspiciously resembles a TV set.

and theatrical quotas. Such factors brought annual production from a low of five films in 1994 to thirty in 2001 and eighty-one in 2010.

Hopes for a Brazilian film renaissance were raised when Walter Salles's *Central Station* (1998), considered the first major film of the new Brazilian cinema, won international success. A gruff ex-teacher who makes a living writing letters for illiterate people is saddled with a boy whose mother has been run over. The old woman grows to love him while the two wander the Brazilian countryside (**26.16**). *Central Station* boasted Hollywood-style production values, including a lush musical score and sumptuous cinematography quite different from the handheld roughness of the Cinema Nôvo era. It won more than thirty awards, was nominated for two Oscars, and earned an impressive $17 million worldwide.

Older directors also took advantage of increased investment. Diegues made *Orfeu* (1999), set during the Rio Carnival and featuring vibrant music, set and costume design, and cinematography. Guerra directed *Estorvo* (2000), retaining his political approach by obtaining Cuban cofinancing for a critical look at the gap between haves and have-nots.

In 2001, the government added to its support by granting tax breaks to foreign companies producing locally. Sony, Warner Bros., and 20th Century Fox decided to make or buy local films for distribution at home and abroad. Brazil was a vulnerable; it had by far the largest filmgoing public on the continent, but because its primary language was Portuguese, it could not send its films easily to Spanish-speaking countries or get backing from Europe.

The Hollywood strategy succeeded: 2003 came to be known as the "legendary year" because seven Brazilian films sold more than a million and a half tickets each. Local films commanded an all-time high market share of 21 percent. Nine of the ten top Brazilian films were distributed by American firms, which publicized them widely. The year's biggest hit, distributed under Columbia auspices, was veteran director Babenco's *Carandiru*, a fictionalized account of misery and rebellion in the country's largest prison.

The most widely seen Brazilian film of the 2000s internationally was Fernando Meirelles's *City of God* (2002), distributed locally by the Disney subsidiary Buena Vista International. Meirelles focused on teenage gangs in Rio's infamous "Cidade de Deus," a 1960s housing project that teemed with violent crime. Meirelles chose his cast after auditioning 2,000 slum kids, and he had to get permission from a jailed local drug lord so that his crew would not be attacked while filming in the streets. With a handheld camera that chased and circled the action in "free-camera" fashion (Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 565), the film evoked the wildness of young people who become criminals by necessity (**Color Plate 26.15**).

After the legendary year, Brazilian films' share of the market dropped off. American companies supported safe, conventional movies, often based on popular TV shows, while imported Hollywood product raked in large sums. By 2006, the government encouraged foreign companies to support films that, like *Central Station* and *City of God*, could play in Europe and America.

Central Station

26.16 *Central Station*: the wandering pair pause by a small chapel in the country.

Coproductions continued to gather strength. Meirelles directed an English language German production, *The Constant Gardener* (2006), and his Brazilian film *Blindness*, also mostly in English, opened the 2008 Cannes Film Festival. In early 2008, José Padilha's controversial police thriller *Elite Squad* (2007) unexpectedly won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. Universal coproduced *Elite Squad*, and it was a big hit at home, as well as being distributed by The Weinstein Company outside Latin America.

In 2012, Kleber Mendonça Filho attracted worldwide notice with a striking first feature. A purely Brazilian production *Neighboring Sounds* is set in a gentrifying but crime-ridden neighborhood. Two families live in a complex of older houses surrounded by new condo high-rises threatening to swallow the entire area (**Color Plate 26.16**). When men are hired to provide security for the block, residents wonder whether this is a cover for a sinister purpose. Filho dealt with modern housing again in *Aquarius* (2016), focusing on a single holdout in an old apartment building and the corrupt real-estate developers who pressure her to sell.

The coproduction strategy continued to benefit Brazilian cinema into the 2010s, with the number of films produced rising from 83 in 2011 to 143 in 2016. As one of the world's top ten film markets, it was a target for US imports. Local films attracted 10–20 percent of ticket sales, a larger share than usual in South American countries.

Argentina

Argentina, for decades the most prosperous and cosmopolitan country in Latin America, suffered extreme political dislocations after the coup that ousted Isabel Perón. During the military dictatorship that ruled from 1976 to 1983, thousands of citizens were arrested and secretly killed. The regime privatized state industries and cut tariffs, opening the country to US films and encouraging cheap local production. What came to be known as the "dirty war" pursued artists, killing, blacklisting, or exiling them. The ill-judged campaign to capture the Malvinas Islands (aka the Falkland Islands, held by Britain) helped topple the regime and led to the election of a civilian government in 1984.

With the emergence of democracy, censorship was abolished and filmmaker Manuel Antín became a director of the National Film Institute (INC). The industry faced 400 percent inflation, but it attracted attention with several films, notably Luis Puenzo's *The Official Story* (1985). The film's highly emotional drama—a woman discovers that her adopted child's mother "disappeared" at the hands of death squads—employs traditional plotting highlighted by symbolic incidents (**26.17**). It became the first Latin American film to win an Oscar as best foreign language film.

The Official Story

26.17 Boys disrupt a birthday party by mimicking a police raid, suggesting that military brutality has warped Argentina's children (*The Official Story*).

Soon a New Argentine Cinema was announced. María Luisa Bemberg explored women's roles in *Camila* (1984), *Miss Mary* (1986), and *I Don't Want to Talk about It* (1993). Most widely seen internationally, apart from *The Official Story*, was Fernando Solanas's *Tangos: The Exile of Gardel* (1985). Alternately amusing and mournful, the film celebrates the tango's place in Argentine culture as exiles living in Paris stage a *tanguedia*, a comedy/tragedy presented through dance. Solanas, collaborator on the militant *The Hour of the Fur*naces (see Argentina: Third Cinema p. 483), exploits art-cinema shifts into fantasy, wrapping his exiles in a cheerful, unexplained cloud of yellow smoke (**Color Plate 26.17**). Started in France during the "dirty war," *Tangos* was completed in Argentina and became a box-office hit.

As in Brazil and other South American countries, Argentina saw a crisis in film production during the first half of the 1990s. The turnaround came in 1995, with a new video tax funding loans for filmmaking. The INC became the INCAA (National Institute for Cinema and Audiovisual Arts) and converted an old Buenos Aires film theater into a three-screen showcase for local films. The spread of multiplexes drew wider audiences to films of all types, and a small arthouse trend developed. Box-office income for the most popular Argentine films was as high as for the biggest Hollywood imports.

These favorable conditions attracted foreign investment for such coproductions as the Argentine–Spanish project *Tango* (1998). Veteran Spanish director Carlos Saura staged the love story, with its numerous dance numbers, in a white studio bathed with vividly colored lights, creating dramatic widescreen images. Just as *Tango*'s international success (including an Academy Award nomination) seemed to signal Argentine cinema's resurgence, the country plunged into another economic crisis, and the INCAA was forced to cut budgets by half. Argentine–Spanish coproductions continued to boost local production despite hard times. A record of forty-three local films appeared in 2000, but fell again as the crisis persisted. In 2002, inflation was running at 45 percent, and the peso was devalued to a third of its previous level against the American dollar.

Even as box-office earnings declined, however, local films were winning acclaim at international festivals and bringing the country's cinema greater prominence. Brazilian director Walter Salles's *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004; a US–Argentina–Chile–Peru coproduction) was shot in several South American countries. It follows the travels of the young Che Guevara as he witnesses the social injustices that will turn him into a charismatic revolutionary.

In 2009, Juan José Campanella's Spanish–Argentine coproduction *The Secret in Their Eyes* became the most successful Argentine film to date. Its protagonist, a retired judicial investigator, begins a novel based on an unsolved rape-murder case from 25 years earlier; flashbacks reveal his initial efforts, and he reopens the case. *The Secret in Their Eyes* grossed $34 million worldwide and won many international awards. The breakout hit *Wild Tales* (Damián Szifron, 2014), a compilation of six black comedies of revenge, topped the local box office and earned $27 million worldwide.

The most prominent Argentine director to emerge during the 2000s was Lucrecia Martel. *La ciénaga* ("The Swamp," 2001), which received Ibermedia support for distribution abroad, was nominated for the top prize at the Berlin Film Festival. While many local filmmakers focused on the problems of the working class, Martel's film was a study of the aimless existence of an extended wealthy family, captured more through an accumulation of closely framed details than through its slim narrative line. In the opening, a torpid batch of partiers lounge by a scummy swimming pool, oblivious to the decay around them (**Color Plate 26.18**).

Martel's second feature, *The Holy Girl* (2004), confirmed her as one of the country's leading filmmakers. *The Headless Woman* (2008) moved toward highly elliptical narration, leaving key actions and reactions just offscreen (**26.18**). The film continued Martel's exploration of the corruption caused by class and ethnic differences in her home region of Salta. After a hiatus due to illness, she won acclaim for her first period story. *Zama* (2017) was a Kafkaesque tale of an eighteenth-century Spanish colonial official trapped in a remote Patagonian town (**Video 26.2**).

The Headless Woman

26.18 Martel's abstract framings conceal characters' reactions in the aftermath of a traumatic traffic accident (*The Headless Woman*).

Neither an occasional hit nor a prestigious auteur could secure the mass audience. Hollywood films took in 75–80 percent of ticket earnings. From 2016 on, production soared to more than 200 features, far ahead of any other Latin American country, but overall admissions remained flat. In 2019, INCAA was admitted to the Eurimages fund in the hope of creating more coproductions for distribution overseas. Meanwhile, local filmmakers could also turn to Netflix, which saw Argentina as a major source of programming for the Latin American market.

Chile and Elsewhere

Many South American countries underwent shifts from free-market dictatorship to uneasy and economically precarious democracy. During the 1990s, the violent efforts to suppress the powerful drug trade, particularly in the cocaine-producing region of Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, led to a slump in theatergoing and reduced local production.

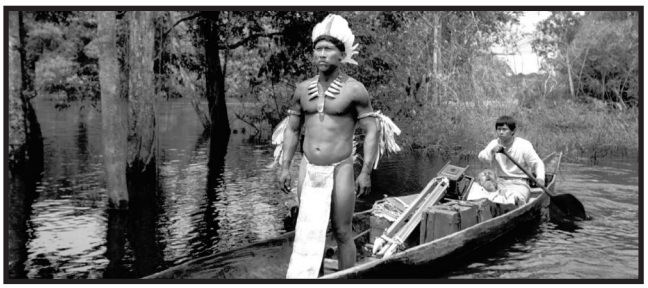
In Chile, the military coup that ousted Communist president Salvador Allende in 1973 installed right-wing dictator Augusto Pinochet in power for almost twenty years. His government sold off businesses to multinational corporations, bequeathing the country the largest per capita foreign debt in the world. Thousands of political killings occurred, with hundreds of thousands imprisoned and tortured. Many fled into exile during Pinochet's reign, and more than fifty "Chilean" features were made abroad by Raúl Ruiz, Miguel Littín, and other New Cinema veterans (see New Chilean Cinema p. 484). Littín even returned in disguise to make a film.

In 1990, Pinochet was ousted and a transition to democracy began. Chile's film industry was slow to build theaters and convert to digital projection. The market was also dominated by American films. Production expanded slowly until by the mid-2010s about forty films were made each year. Local films held little appeal for audiences, and Chilean films' share of the market remained well below 10 percent.

But the regional push for coproductions helped Chilean films gain international notice. Sebastián Silba's *The Maid* (2009), a Chilean–Mexican coproduction, presents a psychological study of a woman who struggles to face losing her job with a family she has served for 23 years. Alejandro Fernández Almendras's *To Kill a Man* (2014, Chilean–French) won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. An unusual revenge tale, it centers on

To Kill a Man

26.19 A nearly five-minute take in *To Kill a Man* shows the hero's patient efforts to lure his enemy outside by setting off his car alarm.


Embrace of the Serpent

26.20 In *Embrace of the Serpent*, the young guide Karamakate prepares to attack a military post exploiting the rubber plant sacred to his people.

a quiet, diabetic park conservationist reluctantly forced to defend his family from a vicious thug (**26.19**).

The most visible Chilean director on the festival circuit was Pablo Larraín. His second feature, *Tony Manero* (2008, Chile–Brazil), centered on a man psychotically obsessed with winning a dance contest for imitators of the protagonist of *Saturday Night Fever*. *No* (2012) portrayed the designer of the advertising campaign against Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite that brought down the dictator. Larraín used 1980s-vintage video cameras, allowing him to insert documentary footage from the era. *No* became the first Chilean film nominated for a foreign language Oscar.

Larraín's *Neruda* (2016) returned to an earlier era of right-wing oppression. The film traces how in 1948 the government drove beloved poet and Communist supporter Pablo Neruda into exile. An early scene shows him and his wife posing in a boat labeled "Resistance" (**Color Plate 26.19**), foreshadowing his escape across Lake Maihue. The critical success of *Tony Manero*, *No*, and *Neruda* led Hollywood producers to woo Larraín to make his first American film, *Jackie* (2016). Larraín's free-camera technique shows John Kennedy's widow grieving after his assassination, interspersed with flashbacks and flash-forwards to other parts of her life.

Despite drug wars in the northwest and other destabilizing problems, most South American countries have managed a small annual output of films, though only a few have gained much stature outside their native countries. Peru, for example, attracted notice at European festivals with *The Milk of Sorrow* (2009, Spain–Peru), by Claudia Llosa, which deals with the ongoing fear of rape by young women in a country plagued by terrorism.

Colombia had little local production until 2003, when a major law was passed benefiting filmmakers and giving tax breaks to investors. Production rose slightly, reaching a 14 percent share of local box office by 2006, but there was little notice of Colombian films abroad. In 2009, they began appearing at major festivals. Ciro Guerra's *The Wind Journey* showed at the Cannes Film Festival, Oscar Ruíz Nava's *Crab Trap* at the Toronto International Film Festival, and Jorge Navas's *The Blood and the Rain* at the Venice Film Festival.

Guerra's next film was *Embrace of the Serpent* (2015), a Colombian–Venezuelan–Brazilian coproduction. It tells interweaving stories of two Amazonian explorers decades apart, one in 1909 and one in 1940, both looking for the same mythical rubber plant considered sacred by local tribes. Both are guided by the same tribal shaman, as a young man and in his old age (**26.20**). *Embrace of the Serpent*, Colombia's first Academy Award nomination, gained nearly a hundred prize nominations at festivals and among critics' groups, about half of which it won. As with Larraín, the success of the film led overseas companies to woo Guerra. Once more, the South American coproduction strategy was confirmed as the most effective way to give filmmakers a chance for international recognition.

Mexico

For decades, the Mexican government controlled the film industry (see Mexican Popular Cinema), and from the 1970s onward, changes in economic conditions and government policy made the fortunes of the film industry fluctuate with dizzying speed.

In 1975, the liberal government bought the principal studio facilities and founded several production companies. The government also cut off credit to producers and took over distribution. These measures encouraged production and fostered an auteur cinema. Paul Leduc's reenacted biography of the journalist John Reed, *Reed*: *Insurgent Mexico* (1973) marked the official emergence of a group of politically active directors, which included Arturo Ripstein (*The Inquisition*, 1973) and Jaime Humberto Hermosillo (*The Passion According to Berenice*, 1976). The older director Felipe Cazals caused a sensation with *Canoa* (1975), the reconstruction of a 1968 lynching in a village.

As Mexico's government moved to the right in the late 1970s, privatization was the watchword. The National Film Bank was liquidated and private production returned. The state invested in just a handful of prestigious projects. Film output fell steeply, and only a few genres found success, chiefly fantasy films featuring the masked wrestler Santo.

The pendulum swung back when, under a new president in the early 1980s, Mexico began an economic reconstruction that included more intervention in the film trade. A national agency was created to finance quality production and lure coproductions from abroad. Mexico became a popular spot for US runaway productions, and the *sexycomedia*, a new genre derived from popular comic strips, began to attract audiences.

Many of the directors favored by state policy in the early 1970s became the mainstays of quality production in the 1980s. In *Doña Herlinda and Her Son* (1984), Hermosillo made the first explicitly gay Mexican film. Paul Leduc attracted worldwide notice with *Frida* (1984), a biography of the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. The film daringly omits dialogue and offers virtually no plot. Episodes from Frida's life, jumbled out of chronological order, present rich tableaux that recall motifs from her paintings (**Color Plate 26.20**).

The government attempted to subsidize quality production, but in 1988, a new regime began liquidating government production companies, studios, and theater chains. Películas Nacionales, the major private company, collapsed soon after, and output slumped. At the end of 1992, however, the government lifted a cap on admission prices in theaters. Income rose, and the industry grew a bit stronger.

At this point, production was dominated by two firms, the government-supported Imcine and Televicine, the film wing of the media conglomerate Televisa. Imcine fostered small independent productions. One result of this was *Like Water for Chocolate* (1991, Alfonso Arau), a popular romance in the growing art-film genre of movies about cooking; it earned nearly $20 million in the United States alone.

The government created the Fund for Quality Film Production in 1999 to bolster Imcine. The number of productions rose, but many never found a distributor. In admissions, box-office revenues, and number of screens, Mexico had become one of the world's top ten markets, a position it held through the 2000s and 2010s. But Hollywood releases overwhelmingly dominated the theaters.

Reygadas and The Three Amigos Mexican production continued to hover on the brink of crisis, but it was given a burst of original talent on several levels. Carlos Reygadas emerged with the mysterious, austere films *Japón* (2002), *Battle in Heaven* (2005), and *Silent Light* (2007). With their unflinching realism, unglamorous sexuality, and wan spiritual aura, they definitely were not projects that would attract wide audiences (**26.21**), but they found success in the festival and arthouse world.

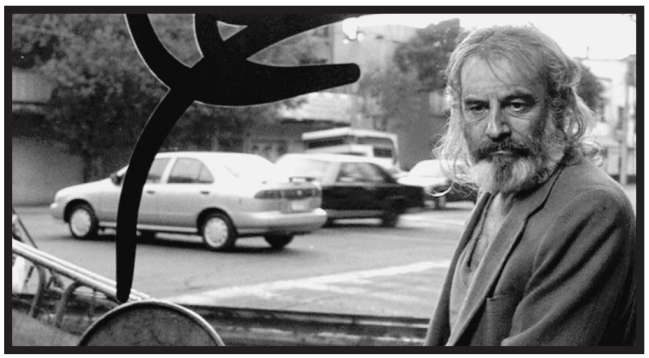
Of much broader appeal were "The Three Amigos," directors who had known each other from television work. Guillermo Del Toro's stylish horror film *Cronos* (1993) was the first to gain critical, if not box-office, success abroad. He went to Hollywood for a horror film, *Mimic* (1997), and returned to Mexico for a better-received one, *The Devil's Backbone* (2001).

In 1991, Alfonso Cuarón made a minor romantic comedy in Mexico before a short stint in Hollywood where he directed two critically respected box-office failures, *The Little Princess* (1995) and *Great Expectations* (1998). He made his breakthrough film, *Y Tu Mamá Tambien* (2001), in Mexico. It earned $33.5 million internationally, including nearly $14 million in the United States and was also nominated for a best-screenplay Oscar.

Alejandro González Iñárritu's first feature, *Amores Perros* ("Dog Lovers," aka *Life's a Bitch*, 2000) was another international arthouse hit. A former director of

Japón

26.21 *Japón*: the suicidal visitor to the mountain village talks with the old woman who befriends him. She asks: "Whom do you like more, the Virgin Mary or God?"


Amores Perros

26.22 In *Amores Perros*, a horrific car crash brings two plotlines together, while the protagonist of the third happens to be nearby.

Roma

26.23 *Roma* recalls Italian Neorealism, particularly *Umberto D* (1952), in its patient attention to everyday surroundings and the "dead time" of household routine (see *Umberto D*: The Maid Wakes Up box p. 320).

advertisements, Iñárritu roughened his approach and made a grim film in muted colors and the free-camera style. A network narrative follows three Mexicans from different classes, all intersecting at one moment (**26.22**).

The Three Amigos were soon courted by Hollywood. Del Toro's second American film *Blade II* was released in 2002, Iñárritu's *21 Grams* in 2003, and Cuarón's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* in 2004. While Iñárritu pursued prestige pictures (see Opportunities for New Directors p. 664), Del Toro and Cuarón tended toward high-quality genre pictures (see Back and Forth p. 667).

The Three Amigos returned to their roots occasionally. Del Toro's most lauded project, *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006, a Spanish–Mexican–US coproduction) was set in Spain during its Civil War. Drawing on the tradition of Magical Realism, it dealt with an imaginative young girl who becomes the stepdaughter of a brutal Fascist captain; she escapes into a fairy-tale fantasy that is both attractive and frightening (**Color Plate 26.21**). The film won both critical acclaim and awards, and its appeal to fans of fantasy assured its entry into American multiplexes, which seldom showed subtitled films.

After winning acclaim with *Children of Men* (2006), a dystopian thriller, and *Gravity* (2013), one of the most ambitious 3D films, Cuarón revisited his Mexico City childhood. *Roma* (2018), shot in bold widescreen black-and-white, presented a middle-class family from the viewpoint of their loyal servant (**26.23**). While paying tribute to the housemaid who raised him, Cuarón recreated 1970s neighborhood life through rich imagery and a dense digital soundtrack (**Video 26.3**).

The 2000s: Multiplexes and the Market As in Brazil and Argentina, multiplexing attracted Hollywood firms. Columbia TriStar started to produce and distribute locally in 2003, and Disney and Warner Bros. followed in 2005. The idea was to make films for around $2 million, break even within Mexico, and earn a profit through export to other Spanish-speaking countries. At last, films from Mexican producers stood a chance of getting picked up for distribution by the US Majors.

Soon the government approved incentives for production: sales tax rebates for foreign films shot in the country and income tax deductions for Mexicans investing in films. By the 2010s, Mexican and other Spanish language films were also increasingly reaching the diasporic audience in the United States, as well as art cinemas and festivals.

Films for export often dealt with the social problems of drug cartels and illegal immigration to the United States. Gerardo Naranjo's *Miss Bala* (2011), hailed as the best Mexican film of its year, centered on a beauty queen contestant kidnapped by a gang to help them with smuggling operations. Like many Latin American directors, Naranjo moved into TV, directing episodes of the Netflix cofinanced import *Narcos* (2015–2017, a Colombian–US coproduction).

Jonas Cuarón, son of Alfonso, directed *Desierto* (2015, a Mexican–French coproduction), a sparse, taut thriller about a group of Mexican immigrants who set out across the US border. They encounter a vigilante and his vicious dog who hunt them down in a chase that occupies nearly the entire film. The fugitives and hunter often become antlike figures within magnificent landscapes (**Color Plate 26.22**). *Desierto* won festival awards and US distribution.

By 2016, the multiplex boom had raised the screen count to more than 6,000, second only to the United States in the Western hemisphere. Hollywood genre fare filled most of those screens, with Mexican films occupying only 10 percent of the market. Still, Mexico's own genre films were increasingly seen abroad, and art films found appreciative audiences in festivals. The health of the

industry depended on the continuation of tax incentives, foreign investment, and a rising generation of Mexican filmmakers.

Cuba, Industry in Isolation

As a Communist state, Cuba had a more centralized and stable film industry than other Latin countries, but here, too, formal experimentation largely vanished in the 1970s. Julio García Espinosa explained that Cuban directors were not yet the masters of their film theaters because "one cannot show only revolutionary films in them."[6] Humberto Solás's *Cantata de Chile* (1976) was a stirring musical pageant (**Color Plate 26.23**), but it was less daring than earlier works. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *The Last Supper* (1977), a critique of the slaveholding aristocracy, was more linear than his *Memories of Underdevelopment* (see Two Revolutionary Films: *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *Lucia* p. 480). Directors sought an accessible style, and genre films came to the fore.

Cuba made only eight to ten features annually, guaranteeing that the films could cover their costs at home. Local films were outnumbered by features from Japan, the Soviet bloc, and other Latin American countries. Yet the domestic product garnered a substantial share of exhibition income, not least because the average Cuban went to the movies nine or ten times per year—the highest average in the Western hemisphere.

Cuba also remained the center of Latin American Third-Worldism. Havana hosted the annual International Festival of Latin American Cinema (established in 1979), which grew to include hundreds of films from the region. In 1985, Cuba established the Foundation for Latin American Cinema, which created the International School of Film and Television, directed by the esteemed Argentine pioneer Fernando Birrí.

Cuba's economic position was precarious, depending on the sugar trade and the bounty of the USSR. The United States pressured Western countries to avoid trading with Castro. Crop failures in the late 1970s, along with the massive emigration of 1980, created a new ideological and economic tightening. In the early 1980s, the state film agency ICAIC reduced budgets, and in 1987 it was reorganized along the lines of the "production-unit" system of Eastern Europe, with each team headed by a major director.

In the late 1980s, new Cuban directors began turning out youth movies and satiric comedies (e.g., Juan Carlos Tabío's *Plaff*, 1988). But when the Soviet bloc crumbled and the USSR dissolved, Cuba was left more isolated than ever. No longer subsidized by the Soviets, Castro had only North Korea and China as allies. In 1991, the ICAIC, heavily in debt, released a mere five features; a year later, it was absorbed into the film sector of the armed forces and the radio-television institute. Cuba's international film school foundered, and Birrí resigned and left the country. Censorship became harsher and some film workers went into exile. Film stock and equipment became scarce. Production slipped to about two films a year. Electricity shortages forced exhibitors to cut back on screenings.

Yet the International Festival of Latin American Cinema continued as a major event. Just as important, in 1997, Cuba was one of the fourteen countries founding Ibermedia to foster coproductions. For decades, foreign coproductions with Spain, France, and other Latin American countries sustained the industry.

Humberto Solás, who had not made a film in ten years, directed the popular *Honey for Oshun* (2001), Cuba's first digital feature. ICAIC began to promote digital technologies as a way to make films cheaply. Digital video also gave entrée to younger filmmakers working without government support. They won money from overseas festivals, secured financing from abroad, or simply paid their own expenses. Small independent producers grew up, though they were not recognized by the state, and their films did not always receive permission for release in Cuba.

Such independence promised a greater freshness and experimentation in Cuban filmmaking than had been possible under government oversight. Miguel Ayula's low-budget art film *Memories of Overdevelopment* (2010), a follow-up to Alea's classic, was financed by independent Cuban firms and a grant from America's Guggenheim Foundation. *Memories of Overdevelopment* was widely shown at festivals but received no theatrical release in Cuba.

The most prominent modern Cuban director, Fernando Pérez, began making features in the days of equipment shortages after the fall of the USSR. Pérez first gained international recognition with *Madagascar* (1995). Due to a lack of processing chemicals, the entire film was shot without the footage being viewed daily; reels had to be sent to Venezuela for developing. The result drew positive reviews in Western festival screenings. His *Havana Suite* (2003) was a city symphony (see Lyrical Documentaries: The City Symphony p. 157), intercutting the lives of ten city dwellers across a single day.

Pérez's modernist ambitions are evident in *Madrigal* (2007). An aspiring writer is working in a production of an avant-garde play (**Color Plate 26.24**). He seduces a woman, perhaps because he covets her apartment. Suddenly the science-fiction story he has been writing comes to life, presenting an alternative-world tale that reverses aspects of the original action and then folds back upon it

in an impossible fashion. Like many Latin American films, *Madrigal* was an Ibermedia coproduction and was financed partly through presales to television.

In 2014, the United States relaxed decades of sanctions against Cuba, and there were signs that Hollywood would return to visiting the country for location work. In 2016, scenes from *The Fate of the Furious* (2017) and *Transformers: The Last Knight* (2017) were shot there.

From the 1970s onward, one trend is clear. The coups, oppression, inflation, and regime changes in South America and Mexico helped strengthen the power of American companies. Throughout the region, apart from Cuba, the Majors were financing and distributing films. Although most of the largest theater chains in the region were locally owned, they showed mostly US films. Hollywood's sway over America's southern neighbors seemed indisputable.

Nevertheless, with coproductions fostered by Ibermedia and support from international film festivals, the more powerful Latin American producing nations gained significant portions of their own exhibition markets. In 2018, the largest shares were achieved by Brazil (about 15 percent), Argentina (15 percent), Peru (13 percent), and Mexico (9 percent). All others fell below 10 percent. Since the late 1990s, more films from all Latin American countries receive distribution abroad, especially in Spain, and some gained international critical attention through festival and art-cinema exhibition.

INDIA: MASS OUTPUT AND ART CINEMA

By contrast with Latin America, India had no need of US or European investment. Cinema was India's fifth largest industry and its principal form of popular culture. Thanks to firm governmental controls on imports, the local product ruled the market. India became the most prolific national industry, with more than 800 features annually in the 1980s and more than 1,000 in the 2000s. Attendance was consistently the largest in the world, hitting around five billion admissions in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

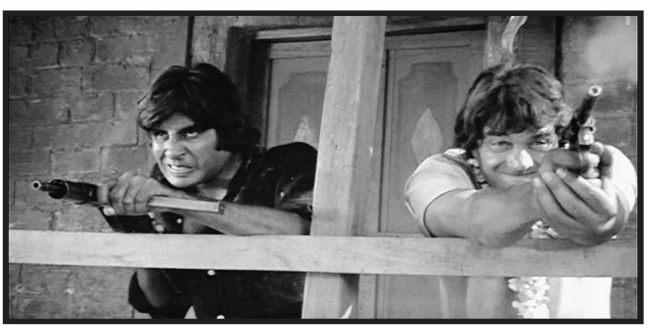
Production remained the chaotic, risky business it had been since World War II. Distributors, exhibitors, and stars controlled the trade, and filmmaking continued to serve as a way to launder black-market money. The international market for Indian films expanded, drawing audiences in Russia, the Persian Gulf, and Indonesia. Within the country, film stars became parliamentary representatives and even heads of states.

Hindi was the official national language, a state of affairs that had long strengthened the "all-India" film made in Mumbai (as Bombay came to be known). In the 1970s, filmmaking in other languages proliferated. Alongside "Bollywood" people spoke of "Tollywood" (Telugu language cinema) and "Kollywood" (Tamil language films). By 1980, the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala were each making more than a hundred films per year. Apart from original works in local languages, some films were remade with regional stars. Madras, the southern production center that drew projects from all over India, became the world's most prolific filmmaking city.

The success of the industry took place against the backdrop of civil unrest. In the 1970s, India conducted a border war with Pakistan. Three decades of riots, assassinations, bombings, and terrorist attacks followed. In Punjab, Assam, Sikkim, and other regions, the government clashed with various ethnic and political factions. Many of the most energetic Indian films of the period bear the traces of a country in precarious political health.

During the 1970s, new trends emerged in popular film. Influenced by US and European Westerns and martial arts films from East Asia, Hindi directors began incorporating more violence and eroticism into their plots. The 1950s ideal of the romantic hero and heroine, played by Raj Kapoor, Nargis, and other pure stars, was contested by rougher-hewn and more action-oriented protagonists, many of whom knew kung fu.

Tall and rugged, the young Amitabh Bachchan was the emblem of this new hero, and *Sholay* ("Flames," 1975, Ramesh Sippy) became the central film of the era. Bachchan plays one of a pair of adventurers who are hired to wreak vengeance on the leader of an outlaw band. *Sholay* cut down the number of song sequences, replacing them with gunfights, chases, and suspenseful action (**26.24**). It blended the tradition of *dacoit* (outlaw films) with the spaghetti Western to create what came to be called a "curry-Western." *Sholay* steered the industry toward more hard-edged drama.


Sholay

26.24 *Sholay*: Bachchan (left) and his heroic partner hold off bandits terrorizing a small town.

Alternatives to the Mainstream

The cutthroat competition of the industry, with its *masala* pictures mixing romance, action, melodrama, and musical numbers, left no room for more experimental films. At two moments the government sought to open up space for other types of cinema.

A Parallel Cinema In the late 1960s, the government encouraged the Film Finance Corporation to shift its support from commercial fare toward low-budget, art-cinema efforts known as Parallel Cinema. When Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome* (1969; see Political Filmmaking in the Third World p. 476) won good box office, other directors' projects were given loans. In addition, some state governments aided low-budget filmmakers; for example, Kerala's Communist government encouraged political films. A sense of "quality" film culture also emerged from new film festivals and screenings at the National Film Archive at Pune.

Although many Parallel Cinema films were made in Hindi, they avoided the spectacle and flamboyant music of Bollywood. Most presented social commentary, influenced by Satyajit Ray's humanistic realism, Italian Neorealism, and European new cinemas. Other Parallel Cinema directors used their films for political critique. In Sen's *The Interview* (1971), a hero looking for a job is played by an unemployed worker; *Calcutta '71* (1972) samples five cases of poverty drawn from forty years of the city's history. Sen experimented with stylized performance, Brechtian reflexivity (see Brecht and Political Modernism p. 498), direct address to the audience, and other tactics of political modernism.

Similarly self-conscious was Ritwik Ghatak's final film, *Reason, Argument, and Tale* (1974). In this rambling, disjunctive work, the aging pioneer of political cinema plays an alcoholic intellectual killed by young revolutionaries. Shyam Benegal contributed to the political orientation of the Parallel Cinema with *The Seedling* (1974), a social drama of a young landlord who exploits a servant and his wife. Benegal's *The Churning* (1976), a tale of a rural milk cooperative, was financed by 50,000 members of cooperatives.

Not all Parallel Cinema films stressed political comment. Although both Kumar Shahani and Mani Kaul studied with Ghatak, neither embraced radical critique. After working as an assistant to Robert Bresson, Shahani made *The Mirror of Illusion* (1972), about an aristocratic woman who dreams of escape from her father's crumbling mansion in the countryside. Mani Kaul, who also admired Bresson, created a sparse, disjunctive film *Uski Roti* (*A Day's Bread*, 1970). An elliptical study of a few hours in the life of a village woman oppressed by a callous husband, the film's minimal gestures, uninflected performance, and long-held "empty" shots made it one of the most experimental films ever created in India (**26.25**).

Uski Roti

26.25 In *Uski Roti*, our introduction to the heroine is daringly opaque, presenting her as turned from us, encased in a scarf, and blocking the girl to whom she is giving fruit.

By refusing the formulas of popular cinema, the new films faced problems. Censors clamped down on many directors. Moreover, the Film Finance Corporation (FCC) had failed to create an alternative distribution and exhibition network. There were no established venues for screening Parallel Cinema ventures, and most failed to pay off their loans. In 1975, an official inquiry into the FFC decided that many of the Parallel Cinema films should not have been funded. The commission also suggested that in the future all sponsored films would have to have commercial potential.

In 1975 as well, Indian politics was rocked by the announcement that the reelection of Indira Gandhi had been found invalid because of campaign irregularities. She immediately declared a nationwide state of emergency and ordered mass arrests of her critics, including nearly all the leaders of opposition parties. The emergency lasted until 1977, when Gandhi was voted out of power by the non-Communist opposition; but a 1980 election returned her to power. In 1984, she was assassinated, which led to widespread rioting.

Under the emergency, the Parallel Cinema's difficulties with censorship and finance intensified. Political dissent was discouraged, and controversial films sent to the censors sometimes simply vanished. The state, reaping profits from high exhibition taxes and its monopoly on film import, favored the commercial industry. After the 1977 elections, however, a burst of politically critical cinema appeared in Bengal. Shyam Benegal became identified with a blend of social criticism and entertainment values. *The Role* (1977) studies a 1940s film actress, and *The Obsession* (1978), financed by its star Shashi Kapoor, was a major commercial success.

Beyond a Parallel Cinema In 1980, the government tried again to develop an alternative to mainstream entertainment. The FFC was reborn as the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). It sponsored screenwriting competitions, promoted Indian films abroad, and backed loans and cofinancing agreements. During its first decade, the NFDC supported almost 200 films. The NFDC was able to pay for such risks by its monopoly powers: it was authorized to import foreign films, bring in raw film and equipment, and distribute foreign films on video. Costs were also defrayed by the NFDC's participation in international coproductions like *Gandhi* (1984).

A new generation of directors, most trained at the national film academy in Pune, emerged under the auspices of government patronage. Some pushed further in the humanist tradition of Ray. Aparna Sen was compared to Ray for her English language feature *36 Chowringhee Lane* (1981). Asha Dutta, the only woman to concentrate on camerawork at the Pune Film Institute, made *My Story* (1984), a seriocomic tale of spoiled youth. In Kerala, Pune graduates founded a film cooperative to help back independent features. An example was Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Rat Trap* (1981), which uses symbolic devices reminiscent of art cinema to show a man's obliviousness to social change (**26.26**).

More adventurous was the work of Ketan Mehta, who drew stylized techniques from popular theater and early Bombay talkies. *A Folk Tale* (1980) employs a narrator familiar from folk drama and offers the audience alternative endings. Mehta's *Mirch Masala* (1987) synthesizes popular musical genres, and *Hero Hiralal* (1988) satirizes the film industry.

Older directors found new energy under the NFDC policy. Ray, Sen, and Benegal won NFDC financing throughout the 1980s. Shahani, who had not made a film for twelve years, reentered production with *Tarang* (1984), a three-hour study of the industrial bourgeoisie, and went on to *Kasba* (1991), a Chekhovian dissection of a struggling family in the countryside. Significantly, *Kasba* relied on stars, one of many signs that the art cinema was making itself more mainstream. This general trend, toward blending serious drama with the appeals of mass entertainment, came to be known as "middle cinema"—called by a national report "thought provoking but still commercially viable."[7]

Rat Trap

26.26 Brother and sister visit their captured rat, unaware that the man's refusal to change will eventually trap him as well (*Rat Trap*).

Coproductions and Satellite TV

The efforts to promote a quality cinema had rather limited results. Another route to diversity was offered by foreign coproductions, which held export possibilities. Festival-based directors were working with firms in Europe and the United States; Britain's Channel 4, for instance, participated in the financing of *Kasba* and Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay!* (1988). The Harvard-educated Nair gained international acclaim for this film and her next, *Mississippi Masala* (1991), which focused on an Indian woman who falls in love with an African American man. Nair followed this with the controversial *Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love* (1997) and the festival favorite *Monsoon Wedding* (2001). By this point, Nair had become the most internationally famous Indian filmmaker since Satyajit Ray.

One of the most controversial films of the 1990s was another coproduction with Channel 4. Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen* (1994) lashes out at the caste system, the mistreatment of women, and police brutality. Based on the true story of Phoolan Devi, a lower-caste woman who was sold as a child bride and then gang-raped by upper-caste men and policemen, the film tells how she joined an outlaw gang and took revenge on her rapists. Devi's election to Parliament in 1996 was widely attributed to the film's notoriety. Like Nair, Shekhar Kapur became a transnational filmmaker, directing the British release *Elizabeth* (1998).

Kapur was criticized for sensationalizing *Bandit Queen* in formulaic ways, but he insisted that only through popular forms could one achieve a socially critical cinema. "In India, there is no salvation outside the commercial cinema."[8] Also pursuing this path was Mani Ratnam, a Tamil filmmaker who found great success with *Nayagan* ("Hero," 1987), an adaptation of *The Godfather*. Ratnam would go on to make the enduring hit *Dil Se* ("From the Heart," 1998), with its dazzling dance number set atop a moving train (**Color Plate 26.25**).

Ratnam's *Bombay* (1995) is more thematically ambitious in its denunciation of the bloody religious strife of the early 1990s. A Hindu journalist marries a Muslim woman, and the couple and their children are thrust into the middle of anti-Muslim rioting. Mumbai neighborhoods were spectacularly recreated in a Madras (now Chennai) studio. Riot scenes acquire a visceral force, handheld cameras race through the streets, and children watch as people

trapped in cars are burned alive. Although banned in some states, *Bombay* proved financially successful, thanks to its topicality, star performances, engaging music, and perhaps its redemptive ending suggesting peaceful coexistence between religions.

Another film offered thoughtful testimony about the years of political violence. Santosh Sivan's Tamil-language film *The Terrorist* (1998) focuses on a woman who has joined an assassination plot (evidently modeled on the 1991 killing of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi). As the conspiracy moves forward, she discovers the importance of human life. Sivan was under no illusions that the film would attract a mass audience. "We didn't want to make it like one masala package."[9]

Outside the realm of festival filmmaking, the most important changes flowed from the government's efforts to open up the economy. In 1991, a financial crisis forced India to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In exchange, the government was obliged to liberalize the economy by expanding competition, welcoming foreign investment, and encouraging consumer spending. One result was the explosive growth of privately funded satellite television.

India was one of the last large countries to make television available on a mass scale. During the 1980s, the videocassette market and emerging cable television drew middle-class viewers away from theaters. But the central government had a monopoly on television, and the 1991 reforms made satellite television indispensable to the growing middle class.

Most households relied on radio for their entertainment. The songs from upcoming releases would be played constantly for months in advance. Television offered a new way to publicize releases, and because most channels needed a constant flow of films, producers gained a new source of post-theatrical revenue.

As in other countries, the diffusion of television initially hurt moviegoing. In 1991, attendance was at 4.7 billion viewers; by 2001, it had sunk to 2.8 billion. Producers scrambled to raise production values to a level that television programs could not match. Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad, capital of Telugu language cinema, offered standing sets of European streets, an airline terminal, and a mock Eiffel Tower. With television competing for middle-class viewers, exhibitors were forced to make theaters more enticing, joining the worldwide trend of multiplexing. Fairly quickly, viewers began to return to the cinemas.

Popular Cinema Changes with the Times

Fortunately for local producers, American films gained almost no traction in the market. In 1992, the government ended the NFDC's monopoly on film import, and, for the first time, recent American movies appeared, often dubbed into Hindi. The success of *Jurassic Park* in 1994 and *Titanic* in 1998 convinced Hollywood to send other blockbusters. Yet the audiences remained loyal to the national product. *Jurassic Park* was unable to trump another 1994 release, the sparkling comedy-melodrama *Hum Aapke Hain Koun. . .!* ("Who Am I to You?"; **Color Plate 26.26**). Across the following decades, foreign imports claimed no more than 11 percent of ticket sales.

Most of the country's billion people lived in poverty, often on only $1 a day. Cinema was their primary entertainment and they wanted traditional fare. As a result, many of the biggest hits presented the familiar masala mix of gorgeous stars, picturesque locales, melodrama, romance, action, comedy, and music. Films remained very long—sometimes around three hours—with a half-hour or more devoted to song sequences. Productions included picturesque foreign locales. The hugely successful *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* ("The One with a True Heart Will Win the Bride," 1995) shows a couple falling in love in Europe before the woman returns to India for an arranged marriage (**26.27**).

In 2000, the government granted the film sector the status of a recognized industry. This action allowed producers to go beyond their traditional narrow, and perhaps

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge

26.27 In *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, the couple hikes through Europe. The man, Shah Rukh Khan, was by then the country's biggest male star.

Baahubali

26.28 The battle sequences of *Baahubali: The Beginning* shift between slow motion and normal motion in the manner of *300* (2006).

shady, sources of funding. Loans from banks encouraged a blockbuster mentality that kept attendance at around three billion annually. Overall, box-office returns grew, thanks to increasing ticket prices in the multiplex market.

Indian blockbusters followed tactics of their Hollywood counterparts. As budgets inflated and big films were scheduled for holiday periods, a single week could account for more than half of a release's revenues. Films relied on product placement and merchandising. *Baahubali: The Beginning* (2015) was advertised a year in advance, with making-of videos on the Internet, teases on social media, and publicity in fan conventions all over India. The sequel was even more heavily marketed.

In form and style as well, Indian filmmakers had one eye on Hollywood. Just as in the 1940s and 1950s, Bombay films drew inspiration from American musicals (see The Populist Tradition and Raj Kapoor p. 359), *Ra.One* (2011) imitated the superhero franchises, featuring car crashes and a Terminator-like robot villain. Digital effects became common (**26.28**). Many films relied on free-camera shooting, fast cutting, slow-motion, voice-overs, and subjective shots.

Filmmakers injected time-jumping and reflexivity into their work. In Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's *Rang De Basanti* ("Paint Me with the Colors of Spring," 2006), idle college students perform in a film about young rebels during British imperial rule. By studying their roles, the actors become radicalized and launch a fight against government corruption. The modern youths are intercut with the original revolutionaries, played by the same actors and filmed in stylized color. Thanks to split-screen, the leaders acknowledge each other across the years (**Color Plate 26.27**).

Network narrative, of the sort already seen in Europe and America (see Degrees of Separation, and The Spirit of the 1970s, p. 556), was on display as well. Mani Ratnam's *Yuva* ("The Youth," 2004) shows a traffic accident changing the fates of three young men. Starting from the 1993 Mumbai bombings, Anurag Kashyap's *Black Friday* (2004) employs a complex flashback construction to trace the links among the attackers. At the climax, the film reveals that the anti-Muslim riots of 1992–1993 drove the terrorists to retaliate against Hindus. *Black Friday*'s theme, that revenge creates an endless cycle, is encapsulated in a Gandhi quotation: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

Farah Khan, the top Mumbai female filmmaker, showed her ability to update formula in more ingratiating ways. Her debut *Main Hoon Na* ("I'm Here Now," 2004) was a college comedy-drama shaded by a terrorist plot. The film switches from battle scenes to slapstick and MTV-style dance numbers, one of them shot in a single swirling Steadicam take. A prom-dance sequence tosses together the Twist, jitterbug, bop moves, and even the shimmy. Giving its knowing polish a handmade touch, *Main Hoon Na* ends with a self-deprecatingly low-tech credits sequence (**26.29**).

Main Hoon Na

26.29 The final dance sequence of *Main Hoon Na*, in which cast and crew hold up deliberately amateurish credits.

Khan kept the masala mix going in *Om Shanti Om* (2007), a lavish tale of romance and horror in a movie studio. Her cartoonish *Happy New Year* (2014) showed men trying to pull off a heist by forming a rather bad dance ensemble. As if responding to Hollywood's gross-out humor, the plot features a thief prone to vomit without warning and an overweight safecracker wearing a cap labeled STUD. Audiences embraced the silliness; *Happy New Year* was one of the year's top films at home and reaped an unprecedented $15 million from overseas theaters.

Other popular directors were aiming for a more unified tone than the classic Bollywood offering. They minimized comedy interludes and song-and-dance numbers. New songs would have to be featured, but they might appear in a club scene, or under a montage sequence in the American manner.

The darker side of Hollywood was echoed in grim urban crime films. *Satya* ("Truthful," 1998) launched a cycle of noir-flavored productions that included *Company* (2002) and *Ab Tak Chhappan* ("56 So Far," 2004). *Kaante* ("Thorns," 2002) modeled itself on *The Usual Suspects* and *Reservoir Dogs*. *Omkara* (2006) was an underworld retelling of *Othello*. The harsh two-part *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012) moved from the 1940s to the 2000s in tracing how the rise of bandit families intertwined with labor struggles and political corruption.

Outside the mainstream, recalling the quiet humanism of Ray and Mrinal Sen, were films focusing on domestic conflicts and social problems. Madhur Bhandarkar's *Page 3* (2005), an exposé of celebrity journalism among the media elite, exemplified this "middle cinema." A major practitioner of this mode was Rituparno Ghosh, a Bengali director who worked in the intimate vein of Satyajit Ray. His stories of stressed professionals and declining upper-class elders were chamber dramas, pivoting on one-on-one conversations and revelations of past pain and missed opportunities. In *Bariwali* (2000), an older unmarried woman rents her house for a film shoot and falls in love with the director, who reminds her of the man she had intended to marry. *Utsab* ("The Festival," 2000) presented a family reunion simmering with long-suppressed tensions. In *Raincoat* (2004), a jobless man trying to start a business meets his old lover and they recall their shared past.

Ghosh utilized major stars and included songs, though as background music rather than splashy spectacle. His early work used the classic 1.33 frame and staged action remarkably far from the camera, in long static takes recalling 1990s art cinema. When he moved to anamorphic widescreen, he relied more on close shots and cutting, letting scenes unfold within elegantly lit and designed sets. He played with memory and fantasy in the manner of European directors. One sequence of *The Last Lear* (2007) recalls Fellini in its use of a ghostly pantomime unrolling behind the aging actor (played by Amitabh Bachchan, of *Sholay*) as he recalls his circus days (**Color Plate 26.28**). Ghosh died in 2013, but a modestly probing "middle cinema" continued, most visibly in the widely exported drama *The Lunchbox* (2013).

Indian Cinema on the Global Stage

DVD was becoming increasingly important, not just within India's borders but among the diaspora. In 2000, more than 20 million Indians were living abroad. Hundreds of thousands of them were professionals working in medicine, research, and information technology. In Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States, this affluent, educated group created a hybrid culture, and Indian films disseminated on video slipped smoothly into it. Films began to tell stories about "NRIs" (nonresident Indians) living in Western capitals. *Kal Ho Nah Ho* ("Tomorrow Will Not Be," 2003), centering on a young Indian woman living in New York, combines romantic rivalry, fatal disease, and hip-hop dance numbers. *New York* (2009) shows an NRI learning that his best friend has been tortured at Guantánamo prison in the wake of 9/11.

By the early 2000s, a third of the industry's income came from outside India. Indian movies also became cult items in Western youth culture and occasionally attracted broader audiences as well. *Lagaan* ("Land Tax," 2001) earned nearly $2 million in Europe and North America and was nominated for an Academy Award. During the 2010s, Indian films routinely began playing cinemas all over the United States and England, thanks to the AMC circuit's commitment, under Chinese ownership, to screening them. *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* (2017), released on 4,000 screens internationally, earned $20 million in its US theatrical release. *Dangal* (2015), that year's top Indian release, enjoyed success on the Chinese mainland.

The essential disparities of Indian cinema remained. Despite the huge number of releases, only 15 percent of them were said to earn back their costs. The audience remained the world's biggest, at around two billion annual admissions in the 2010s. Total box-office revenue, stable at about $1.5 billion, made India one of the major markets. But it could have been much bigger if ticket prices, averaging $0.80, were not among the world's lowest. India's cinema revenues were surpassed by those of France, the United Kingdom, Japan, and other smaller countries.

India had the third largest screen count in the world, after China and the United States/Canada, yet given its

huge population it was underscreened. Although multiplexes sprang up in shopping malls, most of the nation's 12,000 screens were scattered among small rural theaters and cavernous, decaying picture palaces. About the only sign of modernization in those venues was the installation of low-cost digital systems to replace film projection.

Meanwhile, filmmakers charged ahead. Nearly 2,000 features were produced each year at the end of the 2010s. There seemed little danger of Indian cinema's losing its identity. It was likely to remain defiantly oriented to popular tastes. Even when assimilating overseas influences, it stayed deeply rooted in local tradition.

Most films produced in the continents of Africa and Latin America and the subcontinents of the Middle East and India seemed marginal to international film commerce. That was defined by Hollywood, which commanded more than half of the world's theatrical revenues. But filmmakers in these regions faced their problems creatively.

Countries protected from Hollywood competition, in Nigeria, India, and Iran, maintained a vigorous output. Other countries could pursue strategic options. They could build up a base for foreign investment or runaway productions. They might foster a local popular cinema through government assistance and foreign investment. They could establish coproductions with neighbors or with Europe and the United States. And they could squeeze films into international festivals, where they might be bought by overseas distributors. There were even signs that young directors saw genre films as a path to wider distribution. The Moroccan director of *Achoura* (2019) was influenced by 1980s American horror films and was determined to break from the social realism of "what's expected of an Arab movie."[10]

Filmmakers in most of these locales faced so many obstacles—little money, often lack of electricity and water, oppressive or unstable political regimes—that it is remarkable that production could be sustained at all. Circumstances worsened with the 2020 coronavirus outbreak, which threatened to devastate the developing world. Many countries lacked adequate facilities for testing and treatment. Argentina and other shaky economies were at risk of collapse. Some governments took advantage of the crisis to push through harsh policies. Indian authorities isolated Muslim citizens by charging them with infecting others, while leaders of Turkey and Brazil dismissed the pandemic as a plot or a hoax. Continental and subcontinental film industries, always operating at a disadvantage, faced years of new problems. All the more reason to appreciate what the filmmakers accomplished against great odds across fifty years.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Judy Kendall, "Mali," *Variety International Film Guide 1999*, ed. Peter Cowie (Los Angeles: Silman-James, 1998), p. 217.
2. Quoted in Jonathan Kiefer, "Hooked on Nollywood," *Utne Reader* (January–February 2007), p. 32.
3. Interviewed in the film *Iran: A Cinematographic Revolution* (Arte, 2006).
4. Jasmin Ramsey, quoted in Sara Aridi, "Defiant Iranian Directors Speak Out About Censorship, Onscreen and Off," *The New York Times* (1 March 2020), at https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/01/movies/rasoulof-iran-filmmakers-protest.html.
5. Anna Marie de la Fuente, "Latin lovers," *Screen International* (January 9, 2004): 14.
6. Quoted in Michael Chanan, *The Cuban Image* (London: British Film Institute, 1985), p. 275.
7. "Film: Spotlight on Growth," *Digital Dawn: The Metamorphosis Begins: FICCI-KPMG Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2012* (New Delhi: FICCI, 2012), p. 66.
8. Quoted in Yves Thorval, *The Cinemas of India (1896–2000)* (Delhi: Macmillan, 2000), p. 199.
9. Quoted in *Catalogue for 23rd Hong Kong Film Festival* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1999), p. 55.
10. Talal Selhami, quoted in Melanie Goodfellow, "Why Arab and African indie filmmakers are embracing genre cinema," *Screen Daily* (11 December 2019), at https://www.screendaily.com/news/why-arab-and-african-indie-filmmakers-are-embracing-genre-cinema/5145554.article.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On Kiarostami's *Shirin*: "The movie looks back at us"

On Jafar Panahi's arrest: "I don't hate anybody, not even my interrogators"

On Panahi's *This is Not a Film*: "Middle Eastern crowd-pleasers in Vancouver"

On contemporary Iranian Cinema: "Familiar Middle-Eastern filmmakers return to VIFF"

On Kiarostami's last film, completed by his son after his death: "Barely moving pictures: Kiarostami's *24 Frames*"

The Wind Rises

CHAPTER 27

CINEMA RISING: PACIFIC ASIA AND OCEANIA SINCE 1970

Once Were Warriors

As the twentieth century ended, commentators began to speak about the dawn of a "Pacific Century." The phrase referred to those East Asian countries—Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea—whose economies enjoyed explosive growth after the 1960s. It also included the islands, big and small, that lay in the northern Pacific Ocean, like the Philippines and Malaysia, and in the southern reaches, notably Australia and New Zealand. Some of these had been considered "developing nations," but many began to play powerful roles in world affairs. Soon the list included mainland China, which became by the 2010s Asia's strongest presence.

These countries' growing importance was reflected in their filmmaking. Japanese films had been distributed in Europe and North America since the 1950s, but for decades other cinemas in the Pacific Rim were virtually invisible, even to professional film critics. Few Westerners knew anything about Hong Kong film before Bruce Lee burst onto screens in the early 1970s. What ordinary American had seen an Australian film before *The Road Warrior* (1981), or a Taiwanese film before *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), or a mainland Chinese film before *Hero* (2002)? Films like these pointed critics and historians toward entire traditions that had gone unnoticed outside the region.

The countries were very diverse, but their filmmakers faced common problems. They had to produce films that appealed to local audiences in large numbers. The market needed to let in American films because audiences wanted to see them; but that access had to be controlled in ways that kept Hollywood from dominating the box office. Furthermore producers hoped to export films, either for foreign multiplexes or for arthouse circulation.

Countries in the Pacific region, then, display the mix of strategies we have seen elsewhere. Some filmmakers tried to develop a local mass-audience cinema that might compete with Hollywood or, on a more modest scale, simply offer entertainment with local flavor. Other filmmakers aimed

for the international festival circuit. In both realms, "new cinemas" and "young cinemas" emerged. Each option offered chances for international distribution—of genre films featuring martial arts or horror, of art films aimed at specialized theaters and cable and streaming services, and of "auteur" films that heralded new directors with fresh visions. And many of these strategies could be funded through coproductions, which became increasingly common in the Pacific region.

Each of the nations we discuss has usually had a moment in the sun, a period of winning festival acclaim or overseas audiences. For Australia, the golden years were the 1970s–1980s, while Taiwanese cinema gained prominence a little later. In some cases, national film talent bloomed simultaneously: the most striking instance is the trio of "New Cinemas" from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong during the 1980s. Elsewhere, major changes have been out of synchronization. As Hong Kong's industry slumped in the 1990s, South Korea's rose. As Japan's prospects faded during the 2000s and 2010s, China's brightened.

For all these countries, the years since 1970 have seen extraordinary developments. Well into the 2010s, the cinemas of this region were changing film history in vibrant and surprising ways.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Australia and New Zealand entered the international scene thanks to government subsidies akin to those supporting Western European cinema. Both were for a time able to create a "new cinema" for the festival circuit. In addition, both countries won some successes with mainstream audiences. As local films won notice abroad, filmmakers were sought by Hollywood. From the late 1990s onward, both countries also established major production and postproduction facilities and depended financially on Hollywood films being made down under.

Australia

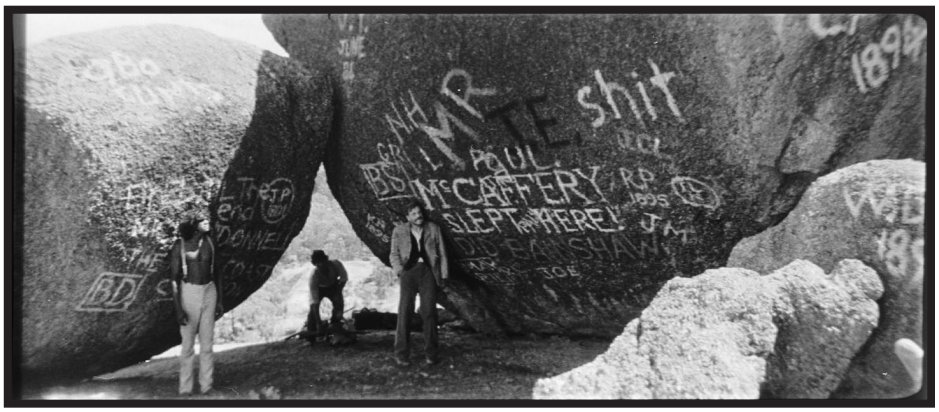
Australian production reached a low ebb in the 1950s and early 1960s. One of the first indications that the country could again make commercially viable films came when Michael Powell, forced to work in television after the scandal resulting from *Peeping Tom* (see Art-House Success Abroad p. 342), made an Australian feature film. *They're a Weird Mob* (1966), a low-budget comedy about an immigrant worker, proved hugely popular.

With state-sponsored efforts to support a sense of a national identity, the arts enjoyed new support. In the 1970s, the Liberal government formed the Australian Film Development Corporation, which funded Bruce Beresford's *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (1972), Peter Weir's *The Cars That Ate Paris* (1974), and other films by directors who would soon create a new wave. In 1972, a Labor government came to power and intensified these efforts, replacing the Film Development Corporation with the Australian Film Commission (AFC). The AFC helped finance about fifty features in its first five years of existence. The Australian Film, Television and Radio School was formed as well.

The New Australian Cinema Television had come to Australia in 1956, siphoning off cinema audiences but also fostering a generation of young directors who longed to make theatrical features. Australian critics of the 1970s favored films by auteurs such as Bergman, Buñuel, and the directors of France's New Wave. The combination of government support and interest in European-style art cinema led Australian directors toward international elite audiences. The breakthrough film was Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1976), set in 1900 and presenting a story of schoolgirls who mysteriously disappear during an outing. The film proceeds at a leisurely pace, creating intense atmosphere through actual locations, haunting music, and luminous cinematography (**Color Plate 27.1**).

The new Australian cinema was largely identified with historical films. Bruce Beresford's *The Getting of Wisdom* (1977) was set in a Victorian girls' school, while *Breaker Morant* (1980) dealt with a Boer War court martial. Weir's *Gallipoli* (1981) was a World War I drama, and in *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982) he recreated the overthrow of Sukarno in Indonesia. One of the rare historical films devoted to the plight of Aborigines, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1978, Fred Schepisi), showed a young Black man striving to succeed in a white world only to be driven to murderous rebellion (**27.1**). Gillian Armstrong picked the Victorian era for her feminist study in *My Brilliant Career* (1979), and Philip Noyce's *Newsfront* (1978) celebrated newsreel filmmakers of the 1930s. In a pattern that would become common in later decades, Armstrong, Noyce, and other major directors were lured to Hollywood, either long term or for one-off projects.

Aside from its prestige pictures, the Australian industry scored some international popular successes. Independently of government funding, the small production firm Kennedy-Miller made a pair of violent road movies, *Mad Max* (1978), set in the present, and *Mad Max II* (aka *The Road Warrior*, 1981), which took place in a postapocalyptic world. Producer-director George Miller, influenced by Sergio Leone's spaghetti Westerns and the New Hollywood, peopled a savage Australian outback with



The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith

27.1 The hero and his companions find a sacred spot covered with graffiti left by white tourists (*The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*).

The Road Warrior

27.2 In a shot reminiscent of the wide-angle images of Spielberg and De Palma, *The Road Warrior* uses a bold depth composition to show the wounded Max flown into the besieged camp.

Punkish warriors (**27.2**). Somewhat later *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), a simple action comedy featuring Australian star Paul Hogan, became a surprise hit around the world.

The successes of both art films and popular movies led to a concentration on more overseas investment, co-productions, and export. *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985) was financed by Warner Bros., while Paramount backed *Crocodile Dundee II* (1988). By the late 1980s, Australian cinema had moved heavily into an international mode, often depending on foreign stars such as Meryl Streep, who performed in Fred Schepisi's *Evil Angels* (aka *A Cry in the Dark*, 1988).

In 1988, the government support agency, renamed the Film Finance Corporation (FFC), linked funding to greater commercial viability, especially on the world art-house market. Soon came a string of triumphs that seemed to revive the golden era of the 1970s and early 1980s. In 1992, Baz Luhrmann's first feature, *Strictly Ballroom*, became an international hit. As with British films, eccentric comedies were often attractive overseas. Both *Muriel's Wedding* (**27.3**) and *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* made the domestic top ten chart in 1994 and were popular abroad as well. The success of *Babe* (Chris Noonan, 1995) and

Muriel's Wedding

27.3 Toni Collette's vibrant performance as the marriage-obsessed heroine of *Muriel's Wedding* made the film a hit and led to her departure for Hollywood.

Shine (1996) seemed to confirm that local production was prospering. Yet *Babe* was entirely American-financed, whereas *Shine* was an Australian–British coproduction.

In 1996, a conservative Liberal-National Party coalition took power, and FFC funding was cut in the following year. On the small-budget level, local productions were increasingly competing with US independent films. No domestic releases became hits on the level of *Shine*, and an expensive failure, Gillian Armstrong's *Oscar and Lucinda*

(1997), made higher government subsidies seem unjustified. The sequel *Babe: Pig in the City* (George Miller, 1998), produced by Kennedy-Miller but financed by Universal, was an even bigger disappointment. Local production slumped, drawing only 4 percent of domestic box office.

Foreign and Domestic Efforts In 2008, the main governmental film-financing agencies were consolidated as Screen Australia, and the rebates for both foreign and local productions were raised to 40 percent. With this generous incentive, the industry was able to attract even more foreign production, particularly from Hollywood, to shoot and postproduce films in Australia. Filmmaking facilities were comparable to Hollywood's. Village Roadshow Studios hosted *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie* (1995), *Peter Pan* (2003), *Alien: Covenant* (2017), and *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017). In mid-1998, 20th Century Fox, owned by ex-Australian Rupert Murdoch, opened Fox Studios Australia in Sydney. This facility housed special-effects firm Animal Logic, which quickly grew into a world-class effects and animation provider. Portions of the *Matrix* and *Star Wars* series were shot at Fox Studios, as were *Mission: Impossible II* (2000), *The Wolverine* (2013), and *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016). By the 2000s, the Australian film industry offered huge studio complexes and access to experienced, English-speaking personnel.

The American influx made successful Australian directors realize that they could stay at home and still benefit from US funding. *Dark City* (1998), for example, was coproduced by New Line Cinema and director Alex Proyas's own company. Baz Luhrmann also decided to stay, shooting the Australian–American coproductions *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), and *The Great Gatsby* (2013) at Fox. George Miller directed the animated film *Happy Feet* at Animal Logic, but it was funded by Warner Bros., as was his later hit, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015).

Most local production did not fare so well. In 2004, the fifteen Australian releases garnered a mere 1.3 percent of box-office receipts. In 2007, nearly twice that many local films captured only 4 percent of the market.

Facing such bleak prospects, many Australian actors continued to emigrate to the United States or the United Kingdom. Toni Colette, Nicole Kidman, Cate Blanchett, Hugh Jackman, Heath Ledger, Geoffrey Rush, Naomi Watts, and others found success abroad. With national production flatlining, a returning luminary could boost a project. Kidman came back to star in *Moulin Rouge!* and again for Luhrmann's *Australia* (2008), promoted as the country's first blockbuster. Blanchett and Hugo Weaving teamed for *Little Fish* (2005), a grim drama about the effects of heroin addiction on a family. Guy Pearce starred in several Australian films, including John Hillcoat's violent Western *The Proposition* (2005). Stars' participation helped such films get released overseas.

Even without such help, local production continued on a modest level. Rather than seeking success through arthouse films, as the filmmakers of the 1970s and 1980s had done, younger Australian directors usually made low-budget films in popular genres, with or without well-known actors. Each year, a few managed to break out and receive distribution abroad. *The Dish* (2000), an eccentric, low-key comedy about the role played in the 1969 moon landing by a small tracking station in Western Australia, found modest international success. So did *Kenny* (2008), a mockumentary about an upbeat plumber. Two breakout horror films were Greg McLean's *Wolf Creek* (2005), in which a psychopath chases and attacks three backpackers, and Jennifer Kent's *The Babadook* (2014), about a supernatural creature haunting a mother and child. Kent went on to make *The Nightingale* (2018), a historical film about the oppression of women and Tasmanian Aboriginals.

Indigenous Elements The 2000s and 2010s saw a slow move to use indigenous actors, subjects, and eventually directors. In 2006, Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr made *Ten Canoes*, the first film shot entirely in Aboriginal languages. Tribal members travel to find materials for building canoes, and through flashbacks an old man advises a younger one about sexual jealousy by telling him stories, including an episode involving a traditional healer (**Color Plate 27.2**). Depending on uniquely Australian traditions and landscapes and nonprofessional actors, *Ten Canoes* won prizes at Cannes and other festivals and had a modest international success.

Indigenous director Ivan Sen won acclaim for his semiautobiographical first feature, *Beneath Clouds* (2002), produced by the Indigenous Unit of the Australian Film Commission. He could not find enough skilled indigenous workers to staff his entire crew, but the production included several Aboriginals. After some documentaries on indigenous topics, Sen made *Toomelah* (2011), a grim tale of Aboriginal life seen from the point of view of a ten-year-old boy.

Warwick Thornton, an indigenous filmmaker who trained as a cinematographer, turned to directing with *Samson & Delilah* (2009), which presented an unvarnished look at a young couple's troubles with drugs and exploitation. Fleeing from their indigenous village to a city creates even worse problems (**Color Plate 27.3**, **Video 27.1**), but Thornton gave the pair a muted happy ending to

discourage hopelessness among Aboriginal teenagers. *Samson & Delilah* won a prize at Cannes for the best first feature.

Sen and Thornton also cast Aboriginals as major characters in genre films. Sen made *Mystery Road* (2013) and its sequel *Goldstone* (2016), both centering on an indigenous detective who encounters racial bias. Thornton set his Western, *Sweet Country* (2017), on the Northern Territory frontier in the 1920s; it deals with historical injustices against Aboriginals.

Despite these successes, the country remained heavily dependent on hosting foreign production and postproduction. Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, Australia struggled. With Hollywood dominating screens, locally produced films usually attracted less than 5 percent of the market. The industry remained heavily dependent on hosting foreign productions and postproduction.

New Zealand

New Zealand followed a similar, though shorter, path to national film production. Sporadic filmmaking had gone on since the early silent era, but there was no organized industry until the 1970s. Roger Donaldson's *Sleeping Dogs* (1977) was the first feature film made by an entirely New Zealand crew, and in 1978, the government established the New Zealand Film Commission to support films at the preproduction stage and to help them find private investment. By the 1980s, a low, if fluctuating, level of production had been established, including *Ngati* (1988), the first feature with a Maori director, Barry Barclay.

Because the population of New Zealand numbered only about 3 million people during the 1980s, films had to find export markets. As in Australia, directors' best opportunities lay with overseas arthouse audiences. If a film achieved recognition abroad, its director was likely to be lured away. Vincent Ward's *The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey* (1988), transporting its characters from medieval England to a modern Australian city, was screened in many markets, and Ward left to make international coproductions. After Donaldson's *Sleeping Dogs* and *Smash Palace* (1981) helped kick-start New Zealand's modest "new cinema" movement, he departed to Hollywood. Geoff Murphy's drama about Maori history *Utu* (1983) and his cautionary fantasy *The Quiet Earth* (1985) were successfully exported, and he too went to the United States.

Jane Campion directed her first feature, *Sweetie* (1989), in Australia. By contrasting two sisters with mental problems, the film explored the boundaries between madness and sanity and between art cinema and melodrama. *An Angel at My Table* (1990), originally made for New Zealand TV, was based on the autobiographical works of poet Janet Frame. Edited into a feature film, it attracted international art-cinema audiences through its subtle performances, which depicted the heroine's struggle against being labeled insane. Campion uses many close shots to emphasize Frame's grubby daily existence, punctuating the scenes with breathtaking landscapes that suggest her lyrical vision (**Color Plate 27.4**). Campion then worked internationally, shooting *The Piano* (1993) in New Zealand but with French financing and two American stars, Holly Hunter and Harvey Keitel alongside New Zealander Sam Neill. Thereafter, Campion has worked primarily in Australia.

In the mid-1990s, film attendance in New Zealand more than doubled thanks to the spread of multiplex theaters. In addition to private producers, the Film Commission was supporting four films a year. In 1994, Lee Tamahori's *Once Were Warriors* became the top locally made film at the box office. Its tale of domestic violence in a working-class urban Maori family both reflected local life and had an appeal abroad (**27.4**). Tamahori went to Hollywood, where he directed crime films and a James Bond entry (*Die Another Day*, 2002).

Peter Jackson and the Aftermath of *The Lord of the Rings* Schlock-horror director Peter Jackson broke into arthouse circles with *Heavenly Creatures* (1994), a stylish depiction of two teenage girls and their murderous fantasies. Although engaged by Hollywood, Jackson, like Luhrmann in Australia, chose to stay at home, making *The Frighteners* (1996) for Universal in Wellington. He created a worldwide stir by undertaking the three-feature adaptation of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (2001–2003). Filming and postproduction were done in New Zealand,

Once Were Warriors

27.4 The resilient mother and daughter of the Maori family in *Once Were Warriors*.

pumping a large portion of the films' estimated $330 million budget into the local economy.

Jackson's success spurred the government to raise its support for the New Zealand Film Commission. One immediate result was a local and international hit, Niki Caro's tale of a feisty Maori girl, *Whale Rider* (2002; **Color Plate 27.5**). Directors who had gone abroad returned, notably Vincent Ward (*River Queen*, 2005) and Roger Donaldson, whose *The World's Fastest Indian* (2005) took the New Zealand box-office crown from *Once Were Warriors*. After *The Lord of the Rings*, major overseas productions began to draw on the country's spectacular scenery and expert work force. In order to compete with the government incentives offered by Australia, in 2003 New Zealand instituted the Large Budget Screen Production Grant, offering a 12.5 percent rebate on the amount of money productions spent within the country.

Jackson used income from the trilogy to build a state-of-the-art facility in Wellington. The complex provided sound stages, a special-effects firm, and a postproduction company that catered to projects large and small, domestic and foreign. Weta Digital became one of the world's top digital special-effects companies with James Cameron's 3D epic *Avatar* (2009) and the *Planet of the Apes* franchise (2011, 2014, and 2017), as well as Jackson's own *King Kong* (2005) and *The Hobbit* trilogy (2012, 2013, and 2014). This success led to a revision of the government's production support, offering grants to large productions shot or postproduced in New Zealand.

Few of the veteran directors of the 1980s and 1990s who had come back from the United States reestablished their arthouse careers. Local production remained low, with fewer than ten films made in most years. As in Australia, younger directors made low-budget genre films that had a chance at export.

The most successful of these filmmakers was Taika Waititi. His short *Two Cars, One Night* (2002) was nominated for an Oscar and his first feature, *Eagle vs. Shark* (2007), received a limited American theatrical release. His autobiographical second feature, *Boy* (2010), surpassed *The World's Fastest Indian* as the highest grossing domestic film and won several local awards, including one for Waititi as supporting actor. With comedy star Jemaine Clement, he costarred in and codirected *What We Do in the Shadows* (2014), a mockumentary about three immortal vampires sharing a house in Wellington. Generational differences provide humor, as when "young" 183-year-old hipster Deacon chats with 8,000-year-old Peter, who bears a surprising resemblance to Nosferatu (**Color Plate 27.6**).

The half-Maori Waititi broke into the American industry by writing the first-draft screenplay for Disney's *Moana* (2016). Although that script was abandoned, Disney hired him to direct the Marvel project *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017). Waititi's rise typified the trend of independent directors being hired for Hollywood blockbusters (see The 1990s: The Majors Get into the Game p. 674). Still, such opportunities would come to very few. New Zealand cinema remained dependent on government support and service facilities for overseas production and postproduction.

NEW CINEMAS IN EAST ASIA

In 1975, of the 4,000 or so feature films made worldwide, about a fifth came from the Asian Pacific region. Although most of these were produced in Japan, other countries contributed a surprising number. Malaysia, for instance, developed a significant film industry thanks to government encouragement. Similarly, Indonesian cinema benefited from protectionist legislation, allowing companies to produce an average of 70 films a year, many in a distinctive horror genre featuring "snake women." Most of these countries' output dropped in the mid-1980s, when the video boom decimated Asian attendance, but in their prime years they produced some significant works, such as Teguh Karya's *Mementos* (Indonesia, 1986).

Each of the smaller producing countries depended on the local market, which was usually controlled by powerful theater circuits. In several countries, the national government helped subsidize production, and this process was firmed up as multiplex theaters were built during the 1990s and 2000s. Throughout the region, multiplexing helped local film industries stabilize. Higher admission prices brought more US firms into the market and made local production and exhibition more attractive to investors.

In Malaysia, for example, investment in filmmaking soared from $15 million in 1999 to more than $60 million in 2003, a period in which ticket sales approximately doubled. In most Pacific countries, Hollywood studios funded multiplexes, local productions, and location shooting for American films. By the 2010s, as digital projection spread and enabled 3D screenings, all of these countries saw a strong surge in attendance.

Producers sought to take their films overseas. The higher-toned route to export was via the festival circuit, and even smaller producing countries sold an occasional arthouse film internationally, such as *The Scent of Green Papayas* (1993, Vietnam), *I Not Stupid* (2002, Singapore), *The Beautiful Washing Machine* (2006, Malaysia), *Opera Jawa* (2006, Indonesia), and *Ilo Ilo* (2013, Singapore). For

regional audiences, most countries turned out martial-arts pictures; one of the biggest international successes was *The Raid: Redemption* (2011, Malaysia). Even Vietnam, ruled by a Communist government and making only ten to fifteen features per year, tried an international action spectacular, *The Rebel* (2007), budgeted at a huge $3 million. Another genre that traveled well was horror. *The Ring* (1998) from Japan provided a low-budget but glossy model that could be followed by filmmakers in Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines across the next two decades.

Personnel and stories might migrate across borders. The popularity of Japanese and South Korean stars made them attractive options for filmmakers in Hong Kong and China. The Japanese mystery novel *The Devotion of Suspect X* was adapted into film versions in Japan, South Korea, and mainland China.

By 2018, Pacific Asia was supplying about 36 percent of the world's feature films. A few had become international blockbusters: *The Host* (South Korea, 2006), with more than $100 million in worldwide box office; *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Taiwan/Hong Kong, 2000), with more than twice that; and above all Hayao Miyazaki's animated features such as *Spirited Away* (2001). Others that played outside the region might find modest success in arthouses, in specialized festivals, and on video. Meanwhile, the region's theaters attracted more than 2.5 billion admissions. The size of the audience encouraged the formation of Film ASEAN, an association coordinating coproductions among its ten member countries.

Thailand

Thailand illustrates the problems and prospects of small filmmaking countries. Thais participated in the revolutionary fervor of the post-1960s era when in 1973 student demonstrations overthrew the country's military government and launched a short-lived period of democracy. The years of struggle steered many intellectuals toward the cinema, and a restriction on imported films fostered a growing audience. Films had been made on 16 mm after World War II, but now the industry could afford to move to 35 mm. This was fostered by Prince Chantreechalerm, one of several members of the royal family with an interest in cinema. His film *Dr. Karn* (1973) introduced a new era of social criticism, and *Angel Hotel* (1974), which showed how the sex market enslaved women, included footage from the 1973 demonstrations.

In 1976, another military junta seized control, and over the next decades Thailand witnessed oppression, struggles for freedom, and new coups. As a result, the film industry's fortunes fluctuated, but given a captive market it managed to turn out as many as 100 films per year, many of them vehicles for teenage stars. There was little support for a film culture, and Bangkok's reputation as a city of shady pleasures made cinema a secondary attraction. The Asian financial crisis of 1997 hit Thailand particularly hard; production sank to fewer than ten films.

Despite the currency crisis, a small infrastructure of production and exhibition emerged. Between 1996 and 2006, Thailand doubled its screen count by building multiplex theaters, which, as in most developing countries, drew a large and affluent audience. At the same period, several young directors came out of television and advertising. Two of these were Oxide and Danny Pang who, after their offbeat hitman thriller *Bangkok Dangerous* (1999), moved between Hong Kong and Hollywood.

Several other emerging filmmakers eagerly worked in popular genres. Pen-ek Ratanaruang's *Mon-Rak Transistor* (2001), *Last Life in the Universe* (2003), *Headshot* (2011), and other polished dramas and thrillers proved popular at home and abroad. Pen-ek's striking visuals owe something to his work in art design and advertising (**27.5**). A more aggressively stylized film came from Wisit Sasanatieng. After his *Nang Nak* (1999) became a stupendous local hit, he went for broke with a bold Western/melodrama *Tears of the Black Tiger* (2000; **Color Plate 27.7**). It became a global cult film, despite its dense references to Thai cinema history.

On the festival scene, the major Thai figure was Apichatpong Weerasethakul. His films radiate an enigmatic innocence; the title of his first feature, *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000), could serve for any of them. Weerasethakul moved swiftly up the international festival hierarchy, winning praise and prizes for *Blissfully Yours* (2002) and *Tropical Malady* (2004). *Syndromes and a Century* (2006) typifies Weerasethakul's art. Beneath the tranquil surface of everyday routines, we sense mysteries. What affinities link

Last Life in the Universe

27.5 Fantasy or parallel reality: a girl's magazines and personal audio gear suddenly rise and float around her in *Last Life in the Universe*.

Syndromes and a Century

27.6 *Syndromes and a Century*: a doctor visits two specialists whose office includes a jumble of prosthetic limbs—good for hiding whisky bottles.

the characters in two clinics, some of whom seem to be doubles of one another? What is being suggested about the effects of Thailand's military culture (**27.6**)? The calm faces and quiet images harbor elusive implications.

Weerasethakul (who asked Westerners to call him Joe) earned still greater recognition with *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010), a supernatural story that won the top Cannes festival prize. *Uncle Boonmee* was followed by several evocative shorts and another feature, *Cemetery of Splendor* (2015). Weerasethakul's static long takes and ripe color palettes made his work attractive for art galleries, where, like other festival-favored directors, he mounted multimedia installations.

As in other countries, Hollywood films took more than half of Thailand's box office. Although local output stabilized at about fifty features per year, and the number of screens rose steadily, things were in flux. One year *Ong Bak*, a 2004 kickboxing movie, earned nearly $20 million worldwide and became the most widely seen Thai film in history. Five years later, budgets were cut and the *Ong Bak* sequel lost distribution in many overseas territories. In 2010, while street violence raged as a result of another political upheaval, the government offered subsidies to filmmakers, including Weerasethakul, who had earlier been the target of state censorship. We will encounter the same pattern in other Asian industries: fluctuating fortunes, bolstered by brief local successes and the occasional export to festivals or the global market.

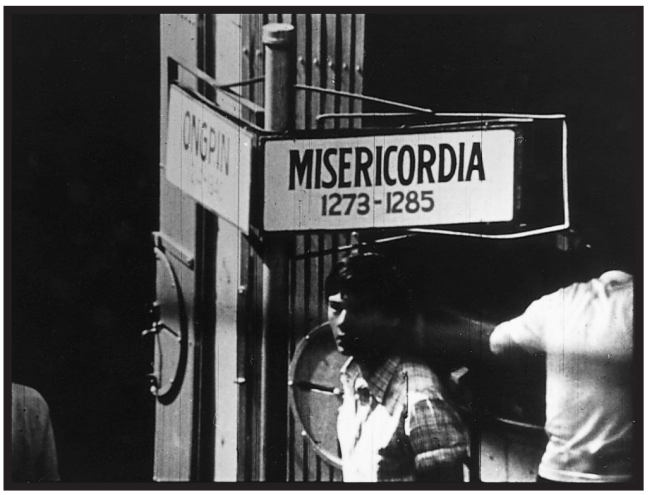
The Philippines

Filmmaking in the Philippines goes back to the early sound era. A small, vertically integrated studio system emerged during the 1930s, but the companies declined after World War II and most production was done by independents. Under the rule of Fernando Marcos and his wife Imelda, production rose, leveling off at about 150 features per year in the mid-1970s. Most of these were in the popular genres of romantic melodrama, musicals (*zarzuela*), comedies, religious films, and soft-core eroticism (*bomba*). A star system was firmly in place, and many plots derived from comic books. The audience was proportionately very large: 1,300 theaters lured in more than 66 million viewers per year.

Most Filipino production is lost, but what survived were many films of the 1970s generation, and these formed a benchmark for modern Filipino cinema. New films retained the rapes, beatings, and other lurid conventions of mainstream genres but framed these as part of social criticism. Ishmael Bernal's *Speck in the Water* (1976), Eddie Romero's *We Were Like This Yesterday, How Is It Today?* (1976), and Mike De Leon's *Black* (1977) dwelt on poverty, crime, and corruption in a manner reminiscent of American film noir.

One of the most noteworthy efforts was *Manila in the Claws of Light* (1975). Lino Brocka had begun making films in 1970, most of them exploiting conventional love triangles and violent action in order to make points about contemporary Filipino life. In *Manila*, after a woman is lured to the city and sold to a Chinese, her fiancé sets out to rescue her. Alongside this passion-driven plotline runs an indictment of economic exploitation. The fiancé's search opens up a cross section of Manila's unemployed men and women, while collateral scenes, such as some dockers' assault on bourgeois men in a movie theater, define the city as a class battleground. Brocka underlines the suffering of slum dwellers with symbolic compositions (**27.7**).

Just as the "New Filipino Cinema" was emerging, President Marcos's government installed much stricter



Manila in the Claws of Light

27.7 The slum dwellers' plight emphasized by the name of the street (*Manila in the Claws of Light*).

censorship. Scripts were reviewed before production, and completed films might be cut or banned. De Leon, Brocka, and others aroused censors' ire. Though not particularly popular at home, their films were winning praise abroad and calling attention to the seamy side of Marcos's regime. Brocka, the most outspoken of the group, spent time in prison for fighting censorship and participating in strikes. Yet he and his peers still managed to make films merging social criticism and entertainment conventions.

In 1986, an urban insurrection overthrew Marcos's regime and installed President Corazon Aquino, widow of an assassinated opposition leader. The revolution raised hopes for a new, dynamic cinema, but mass entertainment ruled the market as intensely as before. Aquino's government passed no measures to protect the industry, and the Marcos censorship apparatus remained in place. A succession of other presidents, including film actor Joseph Estrada, gradually liberalized censorship but offered little financial aid.

Still, across the 1980s and early 1990s, the film industry prospered. Under more liberal censorship, producers began cranking out sex pictures. Up to 200 films were released each year, many of which were *pito-pito* ("seven-seven") films, shot in seven to ten days and aimed at quickly recouping their minimal costs. Theater attendance rose sharply, and several local productions became huge successes. New laws gave more rights to women, and several female directors launched careers. But each film was taxed so severely that it would have to take in three times its budget to break even. Hollywood productions dominated screens. Later in the 1990s, terrorist attacks by Muslim separatists discouraged filmgoing, cutting attendance by half and slashing output to fifty to sixty films per year.

Overall, the economy was improving, partly because of investment from overseas Filipinos. Several younger directors formed independent companies. They turned somewhat away from stinging social criticism in the Brocka-Bernal vein. *Crying Ladies* (2003), about women hired to weep at Chinese funerals, won overseas distribution, as did the gay coming-of-age film *The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros* (2005).

The most experimental films to appear in festivals came from the outspoken Lav Diaz. Diaz, who was turned toward filmmaking by a college viewing of *Maynila: In the Claws of Neon*, continued the tradition of examining history from the standpoint of the victims. *Evolution of a Filipino Family* (2005), shot over eleven years, brings to light oppression under the Marcos and Aquino regimes. "The young and the old seem to have forgotten about the past. . . . No justice has been done to the people who suffered so much."[1] Shooting in very long takes, Diaz favored a minimalist style, but he also mixed found footage with staged scenes, black-and-white 16 mm with video. Several of his films had vast running times—five hours for the futuristic police investigation *Batang West Side* (2002), nine hours for the typhoon drama *Death in the Land of Encantos* (2007; **27.8**). At eleven hours, *Evolution of a Filipino Family* is probably the longest Asian feature ever made. A later trilogy adhering to Diaz's style of long, static shots began with *Norte, the End of History* (2013) and won top festival prizes.

Death in the Land of Encantos

27.8 *Death in the Land of Encantos*: Lav Daiz dwells on figures wandering homeless through the ruins of a typhoon.

Filipino producers were early adopters of digital filming, which seemed the salvation of the domestic industry. The high-definition format permitted the long, static shots Diaz favored. But digital cinematography also allowed Brillante Mendoza to shoot *Slingshot* (2007) among tenement life and street hustlers in eleven days. Mendoza shared Diaz's concern for social criticism, but his handheld camera and fast cutting suited his interest in sensational contemporary subjects. *Service* (2008) is about a family-owned porn-movie theater that hosts drug deals and sexual hookups, while *Kinatay* (2009) is a grueling tale of a violent kidnapping.

The fame of Diaz and Mendoza on the festival scene was paralleled by a surge in Filipino production. Despite continuing terrorist attacks, natural disasters, a dictatorial president, and a vigilante war on drugs, the film industry grew more prosperous. This was largely due to the TV-film conglomerate Star Cinema, which created splashy mass entertainment. The company built up singers, actors, and TV personalities, while it brought CGI and 3D computer animation to its productions. Thanks to Hollywood imports and Star Cinema's record-breaking hits, ticket sales soared through the 2000s and 2010s.

Taiwan

In 1982, Taiwan was an unlikely source of innovative filmmaking. Its products were notorious for being either suffocatingly propagandistic or rudimentary, low-budget

entertainment. Yet by 1986, Taiwanese cinema had become one of the most exciting areas of international film culture.

Taiwan was colonized by the Japanese in 1895, and not until World War II were they driven out. But native Taiwanese were not to enjoy independence long. In 1949, Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindong troops fled Mao's revolution, bringing two million mainland Chinese to the island. The emigrants took control and created an authoritarian state, on the grounds that Chiang, China's rightful leader, would someday retake the mainland. Martial law was declared for the indefinite future.

Initially, filmmaking was under the control of the government, principally through the Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC). The CMPC and other agencies concentrated on making anti-Communist documentaries. Meanwhile, commercial firms copied the costume operas, comedies, love stories, and martial-arts movies brought in from Hong Kong. Some Hong Kong companies set up studios in Taiwan. Soon the CMPC moved toward fictional films no less didactic than its documentaries had been. Production soared, reaching more than 200 features per year, and movie attendance increased dramatically.

Yet in the early 1980s, a decline set in. Star-laden Hong Kong films pulled viewers away from domestic productions. At the same time, Taiwan was shifting from a rural economy to one based on manufacturing and modern technology. For many young people, Chiang Kai-shek's promise to recapture the mainland was dead; they sought a distinct cultural identity. College-educated and urban white-collar workers disdained the action pictures and romances that were the staples of Taiwanese production.

The Taiwanese New Wave A new film culture emerged. The government created a national archive in 1979, and three years later an annual film festival began showcasing new works. Film magazines appeared, and European classics were screened in universities and small theaters. As with many new waves—in 1950s France, in 1960s Eastern Europe, in 1970s Germany—an educated, affluent audience was ready for a national art cinema.

So too was the industry. By 1982, the box-office decline pressed the CMPC and commercial producers to recruit young, largely Western-trained directors. The success of the anthology films *In Our Times* (1982) and *The Sandwich Man* (1983) and a host of new features proved that low-budget films could attract audiences and win prestige at festivals. In effect, the government conjured up a new cinema. As with many other "young cinemas," the industry welcomed cheap, quickly made films by newcomers.

Like the Neorealists and the directors of France's Nouvelle Vague, the directors took their cameras on location to film loose, episodic narratives, often enacted by nonprofessional performers. Many of the films were autobiographical stories or psychological studies. Because government policy banned overt political comment, social criticism was left implicit. Directors cultivated an elliptical approach to storytelling, using flashbacks, fantasy sequences, and dedramatized situations—all owing something to European art cinema of the 1960s. Two very different directors stood out: Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-hsien. (See Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-Hsien box.)

A New Cohort of Filmmakers By 1987, the New Cinema had ended. The success of video entertainment in Taiwan (a center of tape piracy) drove production to abysmal lows, and Hong Kong imports still ruled the market. At the same moment, however, martial law was lifted, censorship relaxed, and those filmmakers still practicing could broach sensitive issues of Taiwanese history and identity. Hou's *City of Sadness* (1990), which won the main prize at the Venice Film Festival, portrays in muted form how the events of 1945–1949 tear a family apart—a topic filmmakers could not have treated a few years earlier.

Now that Taiwan had no seat at the United Nations, film became a major vehicle for presenting Taiwanese life to overseas audiences. Gratified by the success of the New Wave at festivals, government agencies continued to fund filmmaking. The result, in the eyes of many observers, was a cinema of personal expression that neglected the mass audience. The government, eager to win a place in international trade, took down quotas. American films poured in, making films in the New Wave mold seem rustic and introverted. Taiwanese filmmaking nonetheless continued to win prizes at overseas festivals. Hou and Yang became reluctant to release their films in Taiwan, knowing that they had no appeal on home ground. Ironically, a cinema aiming to capture local life had lost its own public.

The New Wave directors and writers focused on young people's search for identity. *Murmur of Youth* (1997) showed the growing affection between two girls working as movie ticket-sellers. Chang Tso-chi, Hou's assistant on *City of Sadness*, built *Darkness and Light* (1999) around a girl who spends her summer caring for her blind father. Chen Kuo-fu, another associate of Hou, created in *Treasure Island* (1993) a powerful tale of a boy caught up in organized crime, and his *The Personals* (1998) wrung social satire from an executive's search for a husband through a newspaper advertisement.

EDWARD YANG AND HOU HSIAO-HSIEN

Born in China in 1947 to families who emigrated to Taiwan, the island's two major filmmakers pursued diverging paths. Both were given a key opportunity through the government's New Cinema initiative, but their films became significantly different.

Yang went to college in the United States, studying computer science before returning to Taiwan in the 1980s. After doing some scriptwriting and television directing, he won a chance to direct an episode of *In Our Times*, which led to his first feature, *That Day, on the Beach* (1983). The success of the film led him to make *Taipei Story* (1985) and *The Terrorizers* (1986).

Yang focused on the anomie and frustration of young urban professionals. Wearing chic fashions and living in modern apartments, his characters fall prey to mysterious forces rippling through the metropolis. *The Terrorizers*, for instance, intercuts two stories: that of a Eurasian woman involved with terrorists and that of a young novelist who eventually separates from her husband. A fan of comic books, Yang relies on striking imagery, staccato cutting, and a minimum of dialogue. He uses urban architecture to frame his yuppies in static, foreboding shots (**27.9**).

Critics welcomed *The Terrorizers*, but funding for Yang's films waned as the New Wave declined. It took him several years to complete what many regard as his masterpiece. *A Brighter Summer Day* (1991) took its title from an Elvis Presley song and told the story of a 1960s teenage gang. Nearly four hours long, with dozens of speaking parts, the film pivots on what a boy saw—or did not see—one evening in a schoolroom; that glimpse leads eventually to murder. Yang's technique is at its most refined in his gang confrontations, staged in long takes and rich depth (**Color Plate 27.8**).

The Terrorizers

27.9 Architecture and office adultery in *The Terrorizers*.

Hou Hsiao-hsien started in the film industry by another route, becoming an assistant director. His first solo efforts were light-hearted teenage musicals. His episode in *The Sandwich Man*, however, turned him toward a more personal and meditative cinema. His major New Wave films—*A Summer at Grandpa's* (1984), *The Time to Live and the Time to Die* (1985), and *Dust in the Wind* (1986)—dedramatize the narrative. Coming-of-age stories, usually taking place in the countryside, Hou's films recall Satayajit Ray's *Apu* trilogy in showing daily life through closely observed routines. The story emerges not out of dramatic climaxes but out of details, captured in a slow rhythm that had parallels with Europe's "contemplative cinema" (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 565). Hou also evokes the history of Taiwan through the interplay among generations (**27.10**).

Hou applied this dedramatizing strategy to film technique through extreme long shots, long takes, static framing, and almost no shot/reverse-shot cutting (**Color Plate 27.9**). Like Kenji Mizoguchi and Jacques Tati, he subordinates character action to a large-scale visual field. The viewer's eye roams around the frame, led into depth and often to the very limits of visibility. Hou sometimes punctuates these long-take scenes with Ozu-like shots of landscapes or objects.

With *City of Sadness* (1989), Hou launched a trilogy on Taiwanese history, which included *The Puppetmaster* (1993) and *Good Men, Good Women* (1995). In these films, past and present mingle unpredictably, and Hou meditates on the mixture of languages and cultures that constitute modern Taiwan. One of his most striking accomplishments was *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998), a sumptuous recreation

Dust in the Wind

27.10 A characteristic sustained long shot from *Dust in the Wind*: the young man returns from the army to talk with his grandfather.

(continued)

EDWARD YANG AND HOU HSIAO-HSIEN, continued

of nineteenth-century Chinese brothel society. Lit by lanterns, observed in long takes by a gently arcing camera, the sexual intrigues and drinking games become mesmeric (**Color Plate 27.10**; **Video 27.2**).

During the heyday of the New Wave, Hou and Yang tried to form a cooperative production company and an alternative distribution network. The decline of the domestic industry, however, blocked their efforts. Their films had virtually no audience in Taiwan, but overseas financing and the film festival circuit gave them vigorous international careers. Hou's 1990s films were widely considered among the world's best, and Yang won a Cannes prize for the family drama *Yi Yi* (2000), which became his most widely seen film. Yang died in 2007, but Hou continued to work outside Taiwan, shooting in Japan (*Café Lumière*, 2003), France (*Flight of the Red Balloon*, 2007), and mainland China (*The Assassin*, 2015). Both directors' accomplishments influenced young filmmakers across Asia.

One member of this cohort achieved worldwide popular success. Ang Lee was born in Taiwan but studied film at New York University. He returned to his homeland and with government aid made *Pushing Hands* (1991). He followed with *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), a comedy about a gay bridegroom, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994), centering on a father's tense relations with his daughters. These became international hits, and Lee moved into English language filmmaking with projects ranging from blockbusters (*Hulk*, 2003) to personal dramas (*Brokeback Mountain*, 2005; *Life of Pi*, 2012). He did not forsake Chinese cinema, returning to the region for his swordplay saga *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and the spy romance *Lust, Caution* (2007). Although Lee was often considered an American or Asian American director, Taiwanese pointed to him proudly. His early 1990s "father trilogy" gave Taiwan an international visibility it received in no other media.

On the festival front, the most prominent and prolific of the newcomers was Tsai Ming-liang. Like Hou and Yang, he favored long takes and tangled storylines, but he brought to his tales of dysfunctional families an anxious, sometimes, comic eroticism. In *Vive l'amour* (1994), a boy hiding under a bed becomes embarrassingly aroused when a couple make love above him. In *The River* (1997), a gay father searching for lovers in a darkened bathhouse inadvertently makes overtures to his son. *The Hole* (1998) shows an apartment house crumbling and flooding during a rainstorm; casual contacts among the tenants are interrupted by musical production numbers (**27.11**).

The Hole

27.11 A glitzy musical number played out in a decaying apartment building (*The Hole*).

Although influenced by the New Wave, Tsai's films reach back to the music and movies of his childhood in Malaysia. *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (2003) depicts the last night of a decrepit movie house, which is showing a King Hu classic that Tsai saw when he was eleven. Youthful nostalgia, however, does not exclude brash humor; during the screening of *Dragon Inn*, gay men cruising the theater are caught in impish sight gags. *Goodbye Dragon Inn* proved a top local attraction, as did the far more outrageous *Wayward Cloud* (2005), which traced the offscreen romance of two porn actors through song-and-dance sequences and boldly filmed sex scenes (one starring a watermelon). While still making features, notably *Stray Dogs* (2013), a drama about a homeless family, Tsai found alternative outlets in museums and art galleries. *Journey to the West* (2014), a feature derived from some of his installations, shows his favorite actor Lee Kang-Sheng in Buddhist robes walking very slowly through Marseille, France.

Tsai became an influential force in local film culture. His daring themes encouraged directors to tell gay stories with broad appeal, such as *Formula 17* (2004) and *Spider Lilies* (2007). His protégé Lee Kang-sheng embarked on his own directing career. Yet such gains seemed minor in the face of huge problems. Hollywood

films dominated screens. The twelve to twenty Taiwanese films released each year took in less than 3 percent of the box office. The beach-concert comedy *Cape No. 7* (2008) and the gangster saga *Monga* (2010) were rare instances of local box-office hits.

The government experimented with generous credit schemes to invest in local production and to lure foreign projects to the island, but at first these attempts bore little fruit. When Ang Lee won the top prize at the Venice Film Festival with *Lust, Caution*, the government awarded him $600,000. He converted it into a fund to help young filmmakers because "so few Taiwanese directors are able to make a living by pursuing their art."[2] During the 2010s, Taiwan began capturing more of its domestic market with a string of top-grossing romantic comedies, horror films, and even a big costume drama (*Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*, 2011), as well as coproductions with mainland China.

JAPAN

From the 1970s through the 1990s, Japan was the biggest Asian tiger—a prime source of investment, along with innovations in technology, industry, and management strategies. The country was the leader in manufacturing automobiles, watches, motorcycles, cameras, and electronic goods. Japan replaced the United States as the world's major creditor, holding the largest banks and insurance companies and investing billions of dollars in foreign companies and real estate.

In this heady atmosphere, media flourished. Investment firms funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to Hollywood. The Sony company triumphed with revolutionary consumer products: home videotape (1975), the Walkman personal music player (1979), the digital compact disc (developed with other companies, 1982), and the PlayStation game platform (1993). Understanding that hardware needed software, Sony bought CBS Records in 1988, and a year later it bought Columbia Pictures Entertainment. Its rival Matsushita Electric Industrial Company acquired Music Corporation of America, the parent company of Universal Pictures. In all areas of life, from banking and high-tech to consumer goods and entertainment, Japan seemed to be America's only rival.

By the mid-1990s, the bubble had burst and Japan entered its "lost twenty years." Too many bad bank loans led to a long recession. Wages, stock prices, and real-estate values plummeted. Chinese and South Korean companies moved into Japan's overseas markets. Sony, facing competition from Samsung and LG, began an embarrassing decline. Matsushita gave up control of Universal Studios in 1995, and Sony's Columbia struggled to match the expanding market share of Warner Bros. and Disney.

The bubble years had mixed effects on the film industry. Attendance fell steeply. In 1958, the peak year for the Japanese box office, 1.1 billion tickets had been sold; in 1972 and after, fewer than 200 million were sold. Yet box-office income rose stunningly, doubling what it had been in the 1960s. This was due chiefly to soaring ticket prices; Japan's were often the highest in the world.

The vertically integrated Toei, Toho, and Shochiku companies ruled the market. Their most dependable projects came to be their endless series, such as Toho's Godzilla movies and Shochiku's sentimental Tora-San dramas. Like their Hollywood counterparts, the studios built most of their release schedules out of independent projects that they bought or cofinanced. During the 1970s and 1980s, the most profitable live-action genres were martial-arts films, *yakuza* (gangster) tales, science-fiction movies, disaster films, and the so-called *roman porno* (soft-core pornography screened in commercial theaters).

As the country's prosperity waned, the film industry enjoyed a surprising resurgence. Production was cut, but attendance stayed relatively steady. The audience's tastes coalesced around franchises derived from other media. Japan resolved the essential choice facing filmmakers—to go Hollywood or embrace local flavor—by doing both. The industry created franchises that audiences felt to be part of their distinctive culture. Then filmmakers convinced people all over the world to enjoy one product of that culture: cute or violent or tear-drenched animated films. To manage the franchise output, the studios and their collaborators forged a new business strategy. Meanwhile, independent production fostered the auteur and genre films that were welcomed at festivals, arthouses, and video stores around the world.

Independent Filmmaking: Two Generations

In the 1970s, although attendance was stabilizing, American films were starting to make stronger inroads into the market. In 1975, for the first time, box-office receipts from foreign films surpassed those from Japanese films. By the end of the 1980s, most of each year's top-grossing films were American. With a large population and high admission prices, Japan became Hollywood's biggest overseas national market.

As studios cut back on big-budget films, the most renowned directors moved toward international productions.

Akira Kurosawa's *Dersu Uzala* (1975) was a Russian project; *Kagemusha* (1980) and *Ran* (1985) were assisted by French and US backing. Nagisa Oshima's international coproductions were *Empire of Passion* (1978), *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1982), and *Max mon amour* (1986), the last made without any Japanese money. These films retreated from the disjunctive experimentation of Oshima's 1960s films, and none matched the scandalous success of his first French-sponsored Japanese vehicle, *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976). Based on a famous 1936 incident, it centers on a man and woman who withdraw from the political upheavals of their day into a world of erotic play. At the climax, the man languidly succumbs to murder and mutilation. Although shot in Japan, *In the Realm of the Senses* was heavily censored there.

Japanese audiences did not wholly abandon their national cinema. The market could support about 250 films per year, although at least half of these were soft-core pornography. In addition, the major studios' control of exhibition guaranteed them a share of Hollywood's income, particularly after they began building multiplexes. Accordingly, there was money for new projects. Most of the established auteurs were able to acquire financing from both the studios and independent sources. The biggest independent to emerge at the time, Kadokawa, was a prosperous publisher, and it partnered with Toho to finance Kon Ichikawa's *Godfather*-type gangster story, *The Inugami Family* (1976). Shohei Imamura's own company joined with Shochiku for a characteristic tale of rape and revenge, *Vengeance Is Mine* (1979). His *Ballad of Narayama* (1983), a Toei production, won worldwide notice for its presentation of the rural custom of abandoning the old to die.

Recalibrating in the 1970s and 1980s In the early years, the most artistically oriented company outside the studios was the Art Theater Guild (ATG), founded in 1961 and throughout the 1970s still funding a few films by Nagisa Oshima, Susumu Hani, Kiju Yoshida, and other New Wave directors. The ATG also owned a circuit of arthouse theaters for showcasing its product. Bigger independent companies founded by department stores, television companies, and publishing concerns also started producing films, and these firms gave the studios stiff competition. So did the new independent distributors Gaga Communications, Nippon Herald, and Asmik Ace, all of which had cash from their distribution of popular Hollywood films.

The independent companies found that younger directors were glad to work quickly and cheaply. Born around 1960, this generation found political modernism as alien as the New Wave directors had found the great tradition of Ozu and Mizoguchi. The Punk-oriented directors of the late 1970s and early 1980s reveled in the anarchic vulgarity of violent *manga* (comic books) and heavy-metal music. They attacked the stereotypes of Japanese harmony and prosperity with a raucous humor. In Yoshimitsu Morita's *The Family Game* (1983), a college student tutoring a boy winds up seducing an entire family. Sogo Ishii offered *The Crazy Family* (1984), in which household hatreds escalate into a desperate chainsaw battle. The same absurd violence permeates Shinya Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo* (1989). Tsukamoto, who started shooting super-8 mm movies at age fourteen, directed television commercials before he produced this raw fantasy about ordinary citizens becoming robots as a result of their macabre sexual impulses.

The Funeral

27.12 *The Funeral*: a family member takes a snapshot. "Get a little closer to the coffin. Look sad."

Another hope of the industry was Juzo Itami. Son of a distinguished director, he had been an actor, a screenwriter, and an author since the 1960s. Itami's *The Funeral* (1985; **27.12**), *Tampopo* (1985), and *A Taxing Woman* (1987) offered mordant satires of contemporary life. Full of physical comedy and mockery of the new consumerist Japan, they became highly exportable items and made Itami the most internationally visible Japanese director of the 1980s.

Class of the 1990s The 1970s and 1980s directors made their films for local audiences, but the films found international audiences and festival play as well. The pattern continued with a cohort of directors who emerged in the 1990s. Shunji Iwai directed the offbeat romance *Love Letter* (1995) and the dystopian fantasy *Swallowtail Butterfly* (1996), both becoming cult films abroad. The tirelessly self-promoting Sabu (pseudonym of Hiroyuki Tanaka) made post-Tarantino exercises such as *Dangan Runner* (1996), about three men chasing each other through Tokyo, and *Monday* (2000), about a salaryman dragged into a gang war.

Sumo Do, Sumo Don't

27.13 A team of sumo misfits and their cheerful cheerleader (*Sumo Do, Sumo Don't*).

Sonatine

27.14 A typical Kitano "clothesline" composition (*Sonatine*).

Serpent's Path

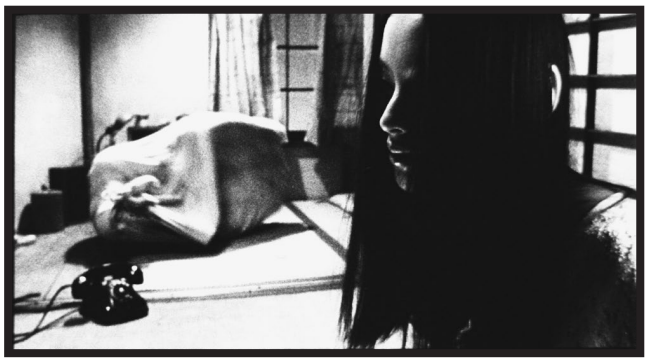
27.15 In Kyoshi Kurosawa *Serpent's Path* (1998), a father, aided by a friend, imprisons the man who killed his daughter.

One sign of the opportunities opened up was the emergence of Japan's first major woman filmmaker, Naomi Kawase. Like many of her counterparts, Kawase attracted attention with a super-8 mm project, a documentary about her long-lost father. Her first fiction film, *Suzaku* (1997), won several major festival awards. When the building of a railroad line is halted, a family has to struggle to get by. One day the father, an unemployed construction worker, walks into the unfinished tunnel with a super-8 mm camera and disappears. Kawase's tranquil treatment of landscape is balanced by a quiet examination of each family member's response to the mystery. *Shara* (2003), *The Mourning Forest* (2007), and *Still the Water* (2014) sustained Kawase's reputation as Japan's most honored woman filmmaker.

Hirokozu Kore-eda came to overseas attention with *Maborosi* (1995), a subdued drama of a widow learning to love her second husband. The stately, distant compositions celebrate the beauty of everyday life (**Color Plate 27.11**) and the remote, forbidding seaside landscape in which the wife finds herself. More in the mainstream was Masayuki Suo, who sought to revive early-Ozu comedy in a series of films about young people, notably *Sumo Do, Sumo Don't* (1992), centering on the adventures of a college wrestling team (**27.13**). Suo found international success with his wistful salaryman comedy *Shall We Dance?* (1996).

The most unusual director of the 1990s was Takeshi Kitano, known by his stage name, "Beat" Takeshi. Japanese audiences loved him as a TV comedian but turned away from his movies. It was on the international scene that he won praise for harsh gangster movies such as *Boiling Point* (1990), *Sonatine* (1993), and *Hana-bi* (1997). Kitano cultivated a deadpan style of performance and image design, with characters often facing the camera, lined up like figures in a simple comic strip (**27.14**). They speak seldom, stare at each other, and remain strangely frozen when violence explodes. Kitano's films compel attention by alternating brutality with almost childish poignancy, especially when he returns to his favorite motifs—sports, adolescent pranks, flowers, the sea. His sense of color has a naive immediacy (**Color Plate 27.12**), and he warms his spare visuals with the cartoonish tinkle of Joe Hisaishi's musical scores. The more lyrical side of Kitano's work emerged in *A Scene at the Sea* (1991), a wistful tale of a deaf-mute couple.

Many of the second-wave directors followed Kitano toward downscale genres. Kiyoshi Kurosawa (no relation to Akira Kurosawa) loosed a barrage of disturbing works, using crime plots and horror conventions in unpredictable ways. His distant and prolonged shots invest grisly situations with a solemn tension (**27.15**). Takeshi Miike also reworked pulp material, turning out shocking movies at a frantic pace. *Fudoh: The New Generation* (1996) centers on schoolboy gangsters and schoolgirl assassins. *Dead or Alive* (1999) is a hard-driving crime movie, while in *Audition* (1999) a salaryman who auditions women to be his girlfriend gets more than he bargained for (**27.16**). Miike enjoyed cult favor overseas with such hard-hitting items as



Audition

27.16 In *Audition*, the salaryman's chosen woman answers his call; unbeknownst to him, a mysterious sack (containing a previous lover?) thrashes helplessly behind her.

Ichi the Killer (2001), but he also offered children's films, a musical, and *Big Bang Love, Juvenile A* (2006), a surrealistic account of a boys' prison.

Younger filmmakers were not the only talent on display. Japanese directors stayed active far into old age. At seventy, the master of the B yakuza movie Kinji Fukasaku had a career rebirth with *Battle Royale* (2000; **27.17**), a futuristic action film that became a video hit around the world. Shohei Imamura, the most prominent survivor of the New Wave, and Yoji Yamada, patron of Tora-San, were directing into their late 1970s. At age eighty-two, Seijun Suzuki showed with *Princess Raccoon* (2005) that he could still create outrageous delirium. When Kon Ichikawa died in 2008, he was older than ninety; two years before, he had released his eighty-eighth movie, *The Inugamis*—a remake of a film he had directed thirty years before.

Partly because of the success of new directors and new genres, partly because of heavy investment from television and advertising agencies, the industry stabilized. The government began supporting domestic production, while private investment increased. American films ruled the top ten, but a huge number of Japanese films were competitive. By 2006, Japanese films claimed more than half of box-office returns.

The pattern continued into the 2010s. Output ran to around 600 features, attendance improved, and ticket income rose comfortably. Japan also shaped regional cinema. As swordplay films had influenced Westerns and martial-arts movies, so "J-horror" was imitated by South Korea and Hong Kong. *The Ring* (1998), which hinged on a videocassette that kills anyone who watches it, became an international hit and spawned sequels and imitations. Midrange pictures that could not achieve overseas distribution reaped income from DVD rights. Companies also benefited from Hollywood remakes of J-horror hits *The Ring* and *Ju-on* (*The Grudge*, 2003).

Anime, Ticket to Success From the 1980s onward, what sustained the industry, both at home and abroad, were the cartoons known as *anime*. Many of these centered on robots, astronauts, and superheroic teenagers (even schoolgirls, as in *Project A-Ko*, 1986). Several box-office hits were animated features, and one, Katsuhiro Otomo's bloody, postapocalyptic *Akira* (1987), became a cult success outside Japan. Working with low budgets, anime artists gave up much of the complex movement of classic animation. Filmmakers exploited canted angles, rapid editing, computer-generated imagery, and lustrous shading and translucent surfaces (**Color Plate 27.13**). Anime of all types yielded profitable foreign television and home video sales. Periodically, in "Cool Japan" publicity campaigns, the government offered financial aid to promote anime as a cultural product.

Battle Royale

27.17 *Battle Royale*: in the Japan of the future, high school students are forced to hunt and kill their classmates. The film's premise would be revamped in the American franchises *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*.

Anticipating the superhero franchises that Hollywood would develop, Japanese companies created strings of features derived from manga, TV shows, novels, and video games. Pokémon, Dragon Ball Z, Doraemon, and other creatures became known around the world. It was not uncommon for most of the top domestic releases in any year to be anime. Makoto Shinkai's body-swapping, time-travel romance *Your Name* (2016) became the highest-grossing Japanese film of all time.

Anime produced some ambitious films, such as Mamoru Hosoda's *Girl Who Leaped Through Time* (2006) and the work of Satoshi Kon, whose *Perfect Blue* (1997) criticized the pop music business. Above all, there stood Hayao Miyazaki (see The Popular Artistry of Hayao Miyazaki box).

THE POPULAR ARTISTRY OF HAYAO MIYAZAKI

Hayao Miyazaki's career began in 1963, when he supplied mundane drawings for TV, feature films, and manga. Moving to directing, he followed *The Castle of Cagliostro* in 1979 with his breakthrough feature, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Winds* (1984). Based on the first sixteen episodes of his epic manga series, it showed a princess in a postapocalyptic world facing ecological disaster and warring kingdoms.

Thanks to *Nausicaä*, Miyazaki was able to cofound Studio Ghibli in 1985. Ghibli was small, but it became one of the world's most revered animation brands. The policy was to make high-quality, carefully crafted features and shorts. That meant long production schedules; Miyazaki finished only ten features in thirty years. Again challenging the norms of the industry, Ghibli created no sequels or series. Its string of popular hits, however, generated considerable licensed merchandise.

Miyazaki's second feature for Ghibli, *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988), typifies his early work. Two little girls move to the country with their father. Their love for their idyllic surroundings is marred by their mother's slow recovery in the hospital. The two encounter a spirit, in shape a cross between a teddy bear and a penguin (**Color Plate 27.14**). Totoro and his fellow spirits help the girls through their emotional ups and downs. *My Neighbor Totoro* went on to become one of Miyazaki's most enduringly popular films, and Totoro's big-eyed face became the Ghibli logo.

Miyazaki's drawn animation creates a lush world reminiscent of classic Disney films of the 1940s such as *Bambi*. The elaborate backgrounds are fully painted with atmospheric lighting and finely detailed landscapes and buildings. The human figures are more cartoonish, with less shading, but they are less exaggerated than most anime characters. While much anime was preoccupied with "mecha," stories of space adventure and robot warfare, Miyazaki gave rural surroundings an aura of supernatural mystery. Totoro incarnates the Shintō tradition of spirits that inhabit trees, rivers, and other aspects of nature.

As computer animation techniques were spreading, Ghibli directors determined to keep drawing their cels. *Princess Mononoke* (1997) employed some texture mapping and digital ink and paint, but the style remained recognizably Miyazaki's. In the same film, his long-standing concerns for the despoliation of nature became more evident and took on a darker tone. The spirits confronting the heroines of *Mononoke* and *Spirited Away* (2001) evoke demonic forces of Shintō myth (**Video 27.3**). With *The Wind Rises* (2013), Miyazaki offered a poignant reflection on Japan's wartime history through a biography of an aeronautical researcher (**27.18**).

All of Miyazaki's films reaped profits and honors. *Spirited Away* recouped $275 million worldwide and remained the top-grossing anime title in Japan until 2016. At that point, six of the country's top ten animated hits had been Ghibli films, with five directed by Miyazaki. *Spirited Away* earned the Oscar for Best Animated Feature, and at the Berlin Film Festival it won the Golden Bear—the top prize for all films, not just animation. Around the world, Miyazaki's films became favorites on video and in retrospectives. In 2017, he launched work on another feature.

Miyazaki's understated treatment of fantastic situations gave his work a poise that other anime lacked. He explained that he tried to "quiet things down a little bit; don't just bombard [children] with noise and distraction. . . . If you stay true to joy and astonishment and empathy you don't have to have violence."[3]

The Wind Rises

27.18 Idealistic aeronautical engineer Jiro concentrates on a test flight, oblivious to the officers behind him. Throughout *The Wind Rises*, he tries to ignore the military implications of his work.

Miyazaki's hand-crafted approach stood out against what had become the industry's business model. Typically, a film was produced by a consortium consisting of a film studio, a TV broadcaster, a publisher, an advertising firm, a talent agency, and a home video company. These "film committees" used marketing data to arrive at a drab consensus, with few creative choices left to individual filmmakers. Perfected for anime, the committee system was applied to live-action cinema, as in the many films based on the TV programs *Bayside Shakedown* and *Hero*.

Japan came to rely on blockbusters that could find regional audiences and global distribution on video. What of independent work? Virtually no films by the 1990s generation of directors were local hits, and overseas festival and arthouse exposure waned. After a symbolic drama (*Dolls*, 2002), period swordplay (*Zatoichi*, 2003), and slapstick comedies (*Takeshis'*, 2005; *Glory to the Filmmaker!*, 2007), Takeshi Kitano returned to his roots in bloody gangster sagas (the *Outrage* trilogy, 2010–2017). Kiyoshi Kurosawa maintained his international cult audience, as did Takashi Miike, who released two films a year in many genres. Both followed proven trends—Kurosawa with slow-burning tales of revenge and Miike with adaptations of manga and video games. Sion Sono was prolific and provocative in the Miike manner; *Love Exposure* (2009) told of a Christ-obsessed young man who likes to photograph girls' underwear. Miike and Sono exemplified Japan's ability to market nonconformity, but they could also be traditional. Miike turned to swordplay films, and Sono's *Land of Hope* (2012) dealt poignantly with survivors of the Fukushima nuclear accident.

Hirokazu Kore-eda proved just as adaptable. He won festival prizes and arthouse distribution with heartfelt films about death (*After Life*, 1998), children neglected by their mother (*Nobody Knows*, 2004), the quiet tensions within a family (*Still Walking*, 2008), and sisters trying to survive without parents (*Our Little Sister*, 2015). The meditative, pictorially ripe *Maborosi* had recalled the density of the Taiwanese Hou Hsiao-hsien, but Kore-eda's later films were more bland in their pacing and visuals. They offered updated versions of the warm humanistic dramas of Ozu, Kinoshita, and other directors of the postwar period (see Japan p. 347).

Japanese live-action cinema continued to win some acclaim abroad, though nothing like what it achieved in the 1980s and 1990s. Highlights were the moving *Departures* (2008), about a young man learning how to dispose of the dead; Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Tokyo Sonata* (2008), a drama about white-collar unemployment; *Fish Story* (2009), a fantasy about an unreleased Punk Rock song changing listeners' lives across the years; and ingratiating comedies such as *Mitsuko Delivers* (2011) and *Key of Life* (2012). At home, with nearly 600 releases each year winning more than half of all ticket sales, the industry seemed to have relaxed. Anime was Japan's prime moving-image product, and nothing seemed hovering on the horizon to overtake it.

HONG KONG

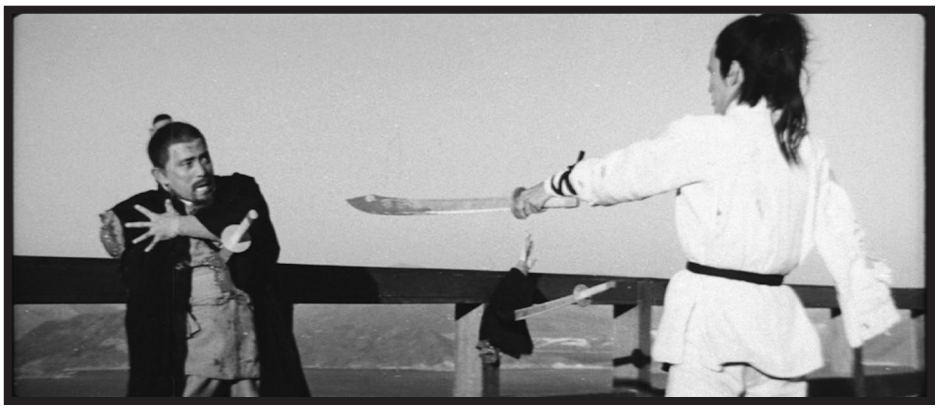
It is not surprising that Japan, with its 125 million people and advanced industrial base, became the most prominent East Asian cinema until the 2000s. What is surprising is that a British colony grounded in shipping and low-cost manufacture, with a population of fewer than seven million, yielded one of the most powerful film traditions in history. When today's superhero flies high and scatters lightning from his fists, or when Neo in *The Matrix* (1999) whispers in awe, "I know kung-fu!" we encounter the enduring legacy of the hundreds of films made in the tiny city-state of Hong Kong.

During the 1930s, it had been a refuge for Chinese filmmakers fleeing the war-torn mainland, and by the 1950s several studios were operating there. Hong Kong firms provided comedies, family melodramas, Cantonese opera films, and swordfight movies to South China and to Chinese populations throughout Asia.

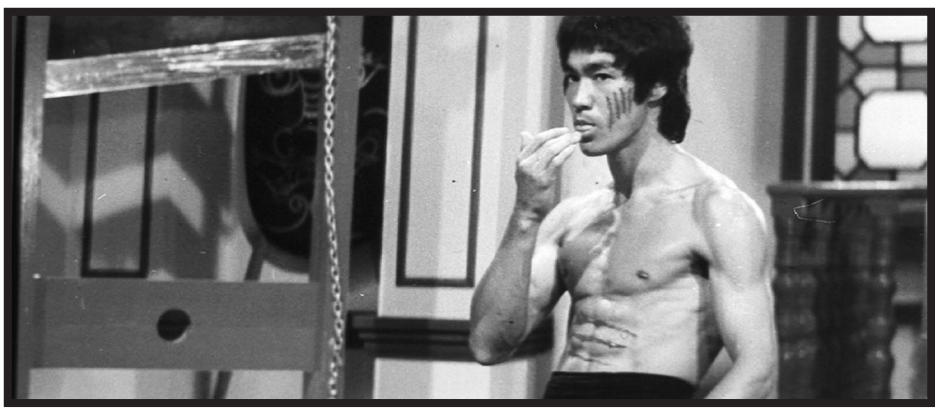
Shaw Brothers and the New Wuxia Pian One company came to rule the market. The Shaw Brothers firm had established an entertainment empire in Singapore. In 1958, the indefatigable entrepreneur Run Run Shaw centered film production in a Hong Kong studio built from scratch. Shaw's Movietown complex held ten shooting stages, numerous back lots (including an artificial lake), an actor's training school, laboratory and sound facilities, and even dormitories and apartments for the employees. Shaw Brothers was vertically integrated, owning distribution agencies and theater chains throughout East Asia, and the company emphasized production in Mandarin, the most common regional Chinese dialect.

During the 1960s, Shaw pioneered a new type of martial-arts film (the *wuxia pian*, or film of "martial chivalry"). Borrowing from Peking-opera acrobatics, Japanese samurai films, spaghetti Westerns, and James Bond films, the Shaw swordplay movies were vehicles for dazzling action. Chang Cheh, the most successful practitioner of the genre, turned *One-Armed Swordsman* (1967) and *Golden Swallow* (1968) into violent spectacles (**27.19**). Chang's assistant directors and choreographers went on to become important directors in the 1970s.

Shaw's other *wuxia pian* master was King Hu, whose *Come Drink with Me* (1965) marked the emergence of the


The New One-Armed Swordsman

27.19 The villain is punished appropriately in *The New One-Armed Swordsman* (1971).


Enter the Dragon

27.20 Bruce Lee licks his own blood to fuel his rage (*Enter the Dragon*).

new swordplay film. *Come Drink with Me* builds its action out of intrigues and masquerades among the guests at an inn. Hu's rapid editing, sweeping widescreen compositions, and Peking-opera acrobatics gave the genre a fresh panache.

Hu left Shaw Brothers for Taiwan, where he made several films. The most influential, *A Touch of Zen* (1970), was mounted on a scale unprecedented in the *wuxia* genre. Based upon the intricacies of Buddhist philosophy, the original version ran three hours and pushed Hu's stylization to new extremes. Warriors hurl themselves over rocks, ricochet off walls and tree trunks, and swoop down from the sky. A fierce combat in a bamboo grove (**Color Plate 27.15**) became a classic sequence, reworked in Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). In Hu's work, the swordplay film achieved a new kinetic grace, and his productions had an enduring influence on world cinema.

Bruce Lee and the Kung-Fu Film Another martial-arts cycle came to even more intense popularity under the auspices of Raymond Chow. Chow had been head of production for Run Run Shaw, but in 1970 he broke away to found his own company, Golden Harvest, and to make films starring the martial artist Bruce Lee.

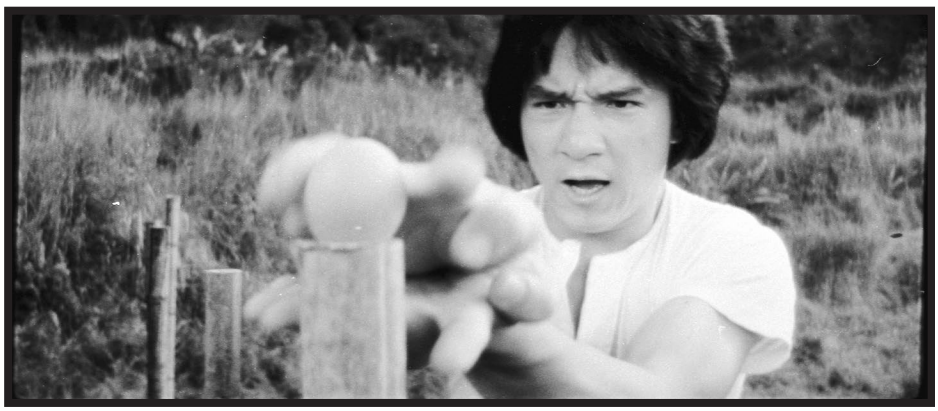
Born to Chinese actors during their stay in California, Lee had been a popular juvenile actor in Hong Kong. But he found only minor roles in US films and television. Then Golden Harvest's *The Big Boss* (aka *Fists of Fury*, 1971) burst onto screens. It propelled Lee to stardom and made kung-fu known worldwide. Chow built on Lee's success with *Fist of Fury* (aka *The Chinese Connection*, 1972) and *The Way of the Dragon* (1972). Lee appeared with minor Hollywood actors in the bigger-budget *Enter the Dragon* (1973), a coproduction with Warner Bros.

The most famous Chinese star in history, Lee opened Western countries to Hong Kong films. He saw himself as an emblem of the excellence of Chinese martial arts, a point made explicit in *Fist of Fury*, which celebrates Shanghai's resistance to Japanese occupation during World War II. Lee's films, enjoyed throughout the Third World, were often taken as symbolizing the rebellious pride of insurgent Asia. His death under mysterious circumstances in 1973 secured his status as a cult hero.

Although Lee directed only one film, *The Way of the Dragon*, he shaped his productions to project his star image. Typically he played a superman, unquestionably the best fighter around but keeping his full force in reserve until the explosive climax (**27.20**). Lee insisted on more realistic

The Private Eyes

27.21 Michael Hui gets the better of his brother Sam in *The Private Eyes* (1976).



Snake in the Eagle's Shadow

27.22 In *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow*, Jackie Chan practices his "snake" attack on unsuspecting eggs.

combat scenes than were the norm in Hong Kong films, displaying his skill in longish takes and distant framings.

After Lee's death, producers cast about for substitutes, but none had Lee's fierce charisma. Nevertheless, foreign audiences had embraced the genre, and Raymond Chow's enterprise grew. By the mid-1970s, Golden Harvest and Shaw Brothers produced around one-third of Hong Kong films. Chow controlled the largest theater circuit in the colony and 500 other screens across Asia. The martial-arts film, as developed under Shaw and Chow, changed the standards for action movies and won Hong Kong films a place in international markets, big and small.

Breakthroughs in the 1980s From the 1960s through the early 1990s, Hong Kong cinema was a vital force. In the colony itself, it dominated the box office. The genres and stars were hugely popular throughout Asia, as well as in Africa, Latin America, and Asian communities in Europe and North America. Vertically integrated companies such as Shaw Brothers and Raymond Chow's Golden Harvest supplied their own theaters with a staple product, while smaller production companies, funded by stars, businessmen, and gangsters, found a responsive audience as well. Because Hollywood films had not much penetrated smaller Pacific countries, Hong Kong films, selling fairly cheaply and boasting high production values, became in effect the Hollywood movies of East Asia.

Some directors, such as Shaw's Lau Kar-leung, sustained the martial-arts genre in *Spiritual Boxer* (1975) and *The Eight-Diagram Pole Fighter* (1984), but on the whole swordplay and kung-fu films declined. Police thrillers, contemporary comedies, and underworld action films became the major genres of the 1980s. For many critics and audiences, the new genres reflected the city's modernizing, Westernizing culture. New stars also emerged. The television comedian Michael Hui formed his own company and provided Golden Harvest with a string of slapstick films (*Games Gamblers Play*, 1974; *Security Unlimited*, 1981; *Chicken and Duck Talk*, 1988). Hui played grasping merchants and boorish professionals, types readily associated with the new mercantile Hong Kong (**27.21**).

The success of Hui's comedies boosted another performer, Jackie Chan. Chan began his career as a Bruce Lee imitator before mixing acrobatic kung-fu with breakneck comedy in *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow* (1978) and *Young Master* (1980) (**27.22**). Chan soon became the biggest star in Asia. Refusing to use a double, he executed astonishingly risky stunts while giving himself a screen persona reminiscent of Keaton and Harold Lloyd—the diminutive, never-say-die average man. Chan also shifted genres rapidly.

Boat People

27.23 The Hong Kong journalist with the Vietnamese children he tries to rescue in *Boat People*.

A Better Tomorrow

27.24 In the midst of a gunfight, two gangsters join forces with the cop, bound to them by blood and love (*A Better Tomorrow*).

Sensing that kung-fu was waning in popularity, he blended action and physical comedy with historical intrigue (*Project A*, 1983), the cop thriller (*Police Story*, 1985), and swashbuckling adventure (*Armour of God*, 1986). Chan remained a popular star for decades, becoming familiar to Western audiences in Hollywood's *Rush Hour* franchise and winning an honorary Academy Award.

The Hong Kong New Wave Young directors who began work in the late 1970s felt united by their cosmopolitan Hong Kong identity. A new film culture emerged with the establishment of the Hong Kong Film Festival (1977), serious magazines, and college courses. Several directors, often trained abroad and starting out in local television production, won international recognition. Some remained independent filmmakers, while others quickly became central forces in the industry—the Hong Kong equivalents of the Hollywood "movie brats" (see The New Hollywood: Late 1960s to Late 1970s p. 458).

After directing in television, Ann Hui entered feature production with *The Secret* (1979), a murder mystery using a number of women in major production roles. *The Spooky Bunch* (1980) helped revive the ghost-story genre, and *The Story of Woo Viet* (1981) looked forward to the "hero" crime films. Hui's international reputation rested on more somber dramas reflecting on postwar Asian history. *Boat People* (1982; **27.23**) explains the political oppression that drives Vietnamese to emigrate to Hong Kong. *Song of the Exile* (1990) traces how a young woman comes to understand the complex past of her mother, a Japanese woman sent to become a prostitute in China during the war.

Other filmmakers contributed to the New Wave. Shu Kei's *Sealed with a Kiss* (1981) detailed a love affair between two disabled adolescents. Allen Fong, who studied filmmaking at the University of Southern California, also specialized in intimate human dramas. Rejecting the hectic pace of commercial cinema, often obliged to shoot in 16 mm, Fong worked in a bittersweet vein reminiscent of Truffaut in *Father and Son* (1981) and *Ah Ying* (1983).

The sobriety of such films identified the Hong Kong New Wave with social commentary and psychological nuance. But this side of the trend was quickly overwhelmed by a rapid-fire revamping of popular genres. Central to this development was Tsui Hark. Tsui studied film in the United States before directing TV movies and some violently satiric features. Influenced by *Star Wars* (1977), he launched a cycle of fantasy *wuxia* films with *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain* (1982), and he gained more recognition with the period adventures *Shanghai Blues* (1984) and *Peking Opera Blues* (1986).

These dazzling, hyperactive mixtures of action, comedy, and sentimental romance borrow openly from the New Hollywood. Tsui's scenes are busy to the point of exhaustion: the camera rushes up to the actors, and wide-angle setups multiply rapidly. A characteristic scene of *Shanghai Blues* shows several characters dodging one another, popping up in unexpected crannies of the frame (**Color Plate 27.16**).

Like Spielberg and Lucas, Tsui became a powerful producer. His company, Film Workshop, produced many of the all-time successes of the Hong Kong cinema. John Woo's gory *A Better Tomorrow* (1986) made television actor Chow Yun-fat sensationally popular and launched a cycle of "hero" films featuring sensitive, romanticized gangsters (**27.24**). Tsui also produced Ching Siu-tung's *A Chinese Ghost Story* (1987), an extravaganza of supernatural martial arts, and the key Jet Li vehicle *Once upon a Time in China* (1991)—both of which spawned numerous sequels and clones. Tsui's success with flamboyant entertainment signaled the end of the New Wave and created a vogue for flashy, fast-paced movies.

The turbocharged films of Tsui and his colleagues began to be recognized in Western circles. European and

The Killer

27.25 Chow Yun-fat and Danny Lee discuss matters in *The Killer*.

Chungking Express

27.26 *Chungking Express*: the fast-food countergirl, now a flight attendant, waits for the man of her dreams.

North American distributors circulated Woo's *The Killer* (1989), in which the gangster-hero cycle reaches delirious heights. In the middle of spectacular carnage and sentimental scenes of manly devotion, genial conversations are conducted at gunpoint (**27.25**). US companies hired Woo, Tsui, and other Hong Kong directors for low-budget action pictures, and Woo became an A-list presence, earning assignments like *Mission: Impossible II* (2000). Yet worldwide appreciation of Hong Kong cinema coincided with a downturn in the industry's fortunes.

The 1990s Onward: No Better Tomorrow The United Kingdom was obligated to return Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in 1997. The movie industry shifted into high gear, pumping out films to make a quick profit in the face of an uncertain future. An actor might perform in more than a dozen pictures per year, shooting one in the morning and another in the afternoon. The criminal gangs known as triads deepened their involvement in the industry by forcing stars to play in quickies. By the early 1990s, production soared to more than 200 features per year—a reflection of the popularity of the films throughout East Asia. Hong Kong producers accordingly raised their budgets, paying for the films by presales to overseas distributors.

The massive output gave opportunities to unusual projects, including art films such as Stanley Kwan's graceful ghost romance *Rouge* (1988; **Color Plate 27.17**) and his biography of Ruan Lingyu (see China: Filmmaking Caught Between Left and Right p. 226), *Actress* (aka *Center Stage*, 1991). The most original art movies were made by the former scriptwriter Wong Kar-wai. After a success with the *Mean Streets* variant *As Tears Go By* (1988), Wong made *Days of Being Wild* (1990), a milestone in Hong Kong cinema. The film used a retro-1960s look to tell the stories of several youths whose lives are linked by a cold, manipulative young man. No Hong Kong film before had been so formally daring and psychologically dense.

The expensive *Days of Being Wild* lost money and drove Wong out of directing for several years. He returned with a string of films that won him international festival attention: *Ashes of Time* (1994), *Chungking Express* (1994), *Fallen Angels* (1995), *Happy Together* (1997), *In the Mood for Love* (2000), and *2046* (2005). Wong became the most artistically respected Hong Kong director. He drew on the elements of commercial cinema—big stars, pop soundtracks, romantic situations, violent confrontations—but poeticized them with a freewheeling, lyrical style.

Wong's films are sketchy, digressive, sometimes self-indulgent but often exhilarating. Plotlines split off and converge unexpectedly (**Video 27.4**). In *Chungking Express*, the story starts with one couple and segues to another, never returning to the first. *In the Mood for Love* centers on a couple that forms when they learn that their spouses have become lovers (**Color Plate 27.18**). Rejecting the urgent pace and ultraviolence of 1980s Hong Kong film, Wong favors languid scenes and wistful imagery reminiscent of French Impressionist cinema (**27.26**). Wong's protagonists yearn for romance, all the while sensing life's transience. Through muted dramas and vivid images, Wong creates a cinema of melancholy rapture.

Honored at Cannes and distributed around the world, Wong Kar-wai's films were not local hits, but there was at the same time a great deal of innovation in popular genres. Stephen Chow became Hong Kong's biggest star with a string of manic nonsense comedies. The ambitious director Peter Chan mined a new vein of Hollywood-inflected romance in the gender-bending comedy *He's a Woman, She's a Man* (1994) and the drama *Comrades: Almost a Love Story* (1996). Tsui Hark came up with *The Blade* (1995), a shattering remake of Chang Cheh's *One-Armed Swordsman* (1967).

New production companies began turning out stylish action films. Most notable was Milkyway Image, led by veteran Shaw director Johnnie To and writer-director Wai Ka-fai. Together they produced piercing neo-noir crime

dramas, including *The Longest Nite* (1996), *Expect the Unexpected* (1996), and *A Hero Never Dies* (1998). To's *The Mission* (1999), centering on hit men hired to guard a triad boss, created a delicately poised visual style reminiscent of Jean-Pierre Melville (see New Independent Directors p. 335) (**Color Plate 27.19**).

The 1997 handover to China coincided with an economic crisis throughout Asia. The regional market grew tired of Hong Kong formulas as Hollywood films spread through the Pacific. Even bankable stars and genres began to wane. The films were pirated freely on video, the overseas market dried up, and the biggest firms collapsed or, like Golden Harvest, withdrew from production and concentrated on building theaters on the mainland. Hong Kong cinema was devastated. Between 2002 and 2006, annual investment in local production dropped from US $120 million to $72 million.

Output plunged to sixty-four features in 2004, fifty-one in 2006, and twenty-eight in 2007. Most films lost money. Each year saw one or two blockbusters, such as Stephen Chow's *Shaolin Soccer* (2001), the crime saga *Infernal Affairs* (2002), and comic-book adaptation *Initial D* (2005). There would also be a few breakout genre films, often horror movies and romantic comedies. Johnnie To was by common consent the most original mainstream director, but his remarkable output of two or three films per year depended on popular hits. To's Milkyway would release a romantic comedy with bankable stars in order to nurture offbeat crime pictures such as *PTU* (2003), *Exiled* (2006), and *Sparrow* (2008).

The industry pinned its hopes on China, where a vast and increasingly prosperous audience had enjoyed Hong Kong film on bootleg DVD. Could Hong Kong become Hollywood for the mainland? China was liberalizing its film market, but government policy still restricted imports, and Hong Kong movies enjoyed no advantage. The best opportunities lay in coproductions. Hong Kong producers assembled packages combining stars from all over East Asia.

In January of 2004, the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) went into effect. This free-trade agreement seemed to allow Hong Kong films favored access to mainland screens. Yet the industry did not regain momentum. CEPA made coproductions somewhat easier, but its strongest concession liberalized the ways in which Hong Kong firms could invest in theaters and in mainland movies.

China's film policy centered on rebuilding its industry, and Hong Kong participated chiefly as a source of investment and a talent pool. Promising young directors and esteemed senior figures crossed the border. John Woo's *Red Cliff* (2008–2009) and Wong Kar-wai's *The Grandmaster* (2013) retained each auteur's signature, but both were aimed squarely at the mainland market. Tsui Hark, Andrew Lau, and other directors made big-budget spectaculars that put forth government policy and official versions of history. Meanwhile, Milkyway Image and other companies persisted in making small films now called "localist." It was a dramatic decline from the days when the movies made in and for Hong Kong caught fire across the world.

SOUTH KOREA

Hong Kong cinema galvanized Pacific Asia in the 1970s and 1980s with comedies and action movies. During the 1980s, Taiwan and mainland China made their mark with outstanding festival films. In the 1990s and 2000s, South Korean filmmaking triumphed on both fronts. It won a regional following with genre offerings, and it supported films that earned festival prizes and Western arthouse distribution. Even more remarkably, directors managed to make local blockbusters that competed favorably with Hollywood's.

The Industry Expands Like Taiwan, Korea had been a Japanese possession until the end of World War II. It was divided at the 38th parallel when the Korean War (1950–1953) ended in a stalemate. North Korea's Communist regime maintained autocratic control over its populace even after the fall of the USSR. For decades, South Korea was aligned with the United States and ruled by military juntas; a moderately democratic system was not installed until the late 1980s. Economically, South Korea shot forward, its entry into electronics and computer technology steered by the family conglomerates known as *chaebols*.

The film industry had long specialized in melodramas and historical spectacles. Many film studios flourished. But in 1973, the government passed stricter laws regulating them, effectively giving a handful of companies control of distribution. Domestic production ran to 100–200 titles per year, supported by a ban on most foreign imports. In 1986, authorities bowed to US pressure and allowed many more foreign titles to enter, which shrank the audience for local product.

One breakthrough came in 1993, when *Soponje*, a historical drama by the veteran filmmaker Im Kwon-taek unexpectedly attracted more than a million viewers. Investment flowed into the production sector from chaebols such as Samsung, and soon major production houses and distribution companies emerged. A younger generation of filmmakers, wise to the production values of Hollywood and Japan, stepped up. The most striking result was *Shiri* (1999), an action thriller about military assassins from North Korea. It drew more than five million viewers and $25 million in ticket sales, beating the local record set by *Titanic*.

Action blockbusters like *Shiri* were joined by comedies, romances, horror films, and urban crime stories.

These were the genres that Hong Kong had exported successfully, but Korean directors gave them an immaculate burnishing that reflected bigger budgets and film-school training. Costume dramas such as *Untold Scandal* (2003) proved popular alongside cult movies such as *Teenage Hooker Became Killing Machine in Daehakroh* (2000).

Domestic films routinely attracted about half the box-office income, a high proportion for most countries. This was partly due to a quota system that demanded that theaters show local films for at least 146 days a year. In addition, a liberal censorship system allowed filmmakers to move toward graphic sex and downbeat stories.

Helped by government initiatives promoting the cultural policy of *hallyu* ("the Korean wave"), local TV shows, pop music, comic books, and films spread throughout the region. Korean films largely replaced Japanese and Hong Kong ones on the cutting edge of Pacific Asia. The government-supported Korean Film Council (KOFIC) not only helped finance the industry but also published books and brochures in English introducing directors and genres, while the national archive circulated DVD boxed sets of classic and recent titles. The Busan International Film Festival, founded in 1996, promoted national filmmaking and became the top Asian showcase and marketplace. World film culture became aware of South Korean movies as never before.

Art Films and Genre Crossovers While Hong Kong could not sustain an art-cinema sector, Korea could. Its films were routinely entering festivals and earning circulation in art houses and on video. Im Kwon-taek had made scores of costume films and melodramas since 1962, but *Sopyonje* gave him global renown. *The Taebek Mountains* (1994) traced the impact of war on friendship and trust in a village. The often-told historical drama *Chunhyang* (2000) was rendered in lush, detailed sets and costumes (**27.27**). The film respects the story's roots in oral narrative by inserting shots of the narrator's performance (*pansori*) into the filmed drama. Im became an embodiment of the new fortunes of the cinema he had served so long; special financing allowed him to finish *Beyond the Years* (2007), his hundredth film.

Im's films were largely traditional narratives, but something more radical was undertaken by Hong Sangsoo. In *The Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* (2000), Hong repeats scenes from different characters' viewpoints. *The Power of Kangwon Province* (1998) starts by following a female student traveling to a resort area with two girlfriends (**27.28**). Returning to Seoul, she tries to find her lover, a college professor. Then the film shifts to his viewpoint. He decides to visit the resort with his friend. Aboard the train, the friend passes the woman (**27.29**). Suddenly we realize

Chunhyang

27.27 Sumptuous costumes and sets and solemn performances highlight Im's *Chunhyang*.

The Power of Kangwon Province

27.28 *The Power of Kangwon Province*: the first scene of the film centers on the young woman riding the train to the resort. The man passing her is, as far as we know now, a stranger.

The Power of Kangwon Province

27.29 Much later in the film, the man whom we now know as a friend of the hero passes her again, and we realize that the film has returned to an earlier time frame.

Secret Sunshine

27.30 In *Secret Sunshine*, the mother, devastated by her loss, refuses to pray with her Christian friends.

that Hong has started his story over, this time attached to a different character. The two men's rambles through the countryside take place at the same time as the visit of the women, who are now sensed as perpetually offscreen.

Turning out one or two films a year on minuscule budgets, Hong satirized urban yuppies and confused intellectuals. His deadpan studies of male complacency were modernist experiments in chronology and viewpoint—replaying scenes with small variations, inserting films-within-films (*Oki's Movie*, 2010), or suggesting alternative universes (*In Another Country*, 2012). Hong's former assistant Lee Kwang-kuk created similar twisted tales in *Romance Joe* (2011) and *A Matter of Interpretation* (2014), which freely mingles its characters' dreams.

Lee Chang-dong was more varied in his experimentation, moving in a fresh direction with each film. *Peppermint Candy* (2000) reviewed recent Korean history by tracing a man's life backward. *Oasis* (2002) presented an unsentimental story of a mentally disabled man drawn to a woman with cerebral palsy. In Lee's *Secret Sunshine* (2007), a widow's effort to adjust to small-town life is shattered by a brutal crime (**27.30**).

The most infamous director of the new Korean cinema was Kim Ki-duk. His films did not attract much of an audience in Korea, but they were staples of overseas festivals. Kim came to notice with *The Isle* (2000), a drama of desire that made memorably grisly use of fishhooks, and continued with *Bad Guy* (2001), *Samaritan Girl* (2004), and *3-Iron* (2004). Kim's later work escalated his shock tactics. *Pietà* (2013), the first Korean film to win a prize at the Venice Film Festival, immersed the viewer in a violent sexual and religious psychodrama, while *Moebius* (2013) was regarded as the most offensive South Korean film yet made.

Several directors straddled the boundary between genre cinema and festival filmmaking. Park Chan-wook directed the blockbuster *JSA* (2000), a political mystery set on the northern border. He followed that with the

The Host

27.31 The plot of *The Host* is set in motion when the river monster snatches his first victim.

hyperviolence of his "revenge trilogy" *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* (2002), *Oldboy* (2003), and *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* (2005). Genre fans could enjoy Park's gripping plots, while international critics admired their arresting imagery (**Color Plate 27.20**). The fervor around *Oldboy* led Spike Lee to direct an American remake in 2013. Park shifted to polished art-cinema eroticism with *The Handmaiden* (2016).

The most successful Korean crossover director was Bong Joon-ho. His career blended local popularity, festival awards, and recognition from Hollywood. *Memories of Murder* (2003), a police procedural based on a real case, was the year's top-grossing film. *The Host*, a Spielberg-like monster movie, found even bigger success at home and abroad (**27.31**). After his grim thriller *Mother* (2009), Bong ventured on English-language projects: the dystopian European coproduction *Snowpiercer* (2013) and the Netflix-financed *Okja* (2017), a mordant fantasy about a giant pig.

Bong's biggest breakthrough came after he returned to his homeland. *Parasite* (2019) was a suspense drama about a poor family cunningly taking over a wealthy household (**Color Plate 27.21**). The film's sly mix of comedy and social criticism, sharpened by the precision of Bong's

direction, propelled it to global fame. Earning more than $200 million worldwide, *Parasite* became the first Korean film to win the top prize at Cannes and the first non-English-language film to win the Best Picture Academy Award. Bong's entertaining, thematically ambitious movies offered decisive proof that South Korean genre projects could engage both specialized and mainstream audiences.

There were a few setbacks. Some would-be blockbusters faltered. After pressure from the US film industry, the quota was cut in half. And the system could break down: in the mid-2010s, the industry was shaken by scandals at the Busan festival and in KOFIC. But South Korea remained a major East Asian force. Box-office receipts continued to set records, and admissions rose as well. Production increased to more than 300 features per year, which won 40 to 60 percent of the market. As in Japan, local viewers balanced their liking for American blockbusters with support of the native product. Occasionally, a film became a worldwide hit; before *Parasite*, the zombie thriller *Train to Busan* (2016) garnered nearly $90 million. The great variety of South Korean films showed that an Asian country's cinema could advance on many fronts—local, regional, popular, arthouse—and give Hollywood a run for its money.

CHINA: THE GREAT SUCCESS STORY

In the 1970s, China was one of the world's poorest countries. By 2013, it was the biggest economy on the planet. It had become the major producer of meat, fruit, vegetables, cotton, and rice. It made two-thirds of the world's shoes and toys, and half of its textiles, cement, and electronics equipment. China was a leader in finance, information technology, robotics, autonomous cars, and Virtual Reality. In 2020, it accounted for a third of global economic growth, more than America, Europe, and Japan combined.

Ordinary people found a wealth few had expected. China sought to prove that citizens could enjoy the benefits of consumer capitalism without democracy. In 1990, some 750 million people lived in extreme poverty. By 2020, fewer than 10 million did. The Communist Party restricted civil liberties and controlled the economy, but private firms welcomed innovation and surpassed state-run enterprises. Because of the 1.4 billion population, a Chinese company could attain colossal scale.

The film industry grew immense. From a handful of releases per year in the 1970s, China was producing more than 600 in the 2010s. In 2017, the country's 50,000 screens outnumbered those in any other country. Annual attendance hit 1.6 billion, making it the second largest audience after India. Box-office revenue, which had been $121 million in 2003, soared to more than $9.2 billion in 2019. A film could garner world-class blockbuster earnings at home.

Like Russia, China replaced a state-funded film industry with a mixed system, in which the government financed certain releases and permitted others to be privately funded. But nearly all films remained under government control via legislation and censorship. Unlike what happened in Russia, however, China's movie entrepreneurs did not confine themselves to the country's borders. By 2016, a Chinese firm owned the world's biggest chain of theaters, including the largest US circuit. Like Japanese firms in the 1980s, Chinese companies invested in Hollywood productions, and American studios had to adjust to the demands of the new Asian powerhouse.

Economic Reforms and the Fifth Generation

"To make money is glorious!" With this slogan, Communist leader Deng Xiaoping announced the government's intention to redeem China's economy after the devastation of the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976 (see China: Cinema and the Cultural Revolution p. 488). Western-style democracy was not on the agenda, but capitalistic reforms were. Farmers could sell privately grown fruits and vegetables; state-owned companies would be privatized and enter into joint ventures with foreign companies. Mobilizing a population of around a billion people, the government could put enormous energy behind its new policies.

In the shift to a market economy, the cinema began to recover. To supply the theaters while production was geared up, hundreds of banned pre-1966 films were released. Foreign films were imported, mostly from other Communist countries, and works of the European art cinema of the 1960s and 1970s became available on pirated videotapes. A new film culture emerged, with several magazines and conferences about the future of Chinese cinema. Production climbed steadily, from 19 features in 1977 to 125 in 1986.

Most films made under the new policy reverted to the polished studio style. *Rickshaw Boy* (Ling Zifeng, 1982), a melodrama set in the pre-Revolutionary period, concerns a man who loses his rickshaw and must rent one from his boss, whose daughter pressures him into marrying her. The glossy studio picture recalled *The New Year's Sacrifice* and other 1950s classics (see Civil War and Revolution p. 357). Some films imitated European models. Yang Yanjin and Deng Yimin's *Bitter Laughter* (1979), set during the Cultural Revolution, centers on a journalist forced to write inaccurate stories. *Bitter Laughter*'s style reflects

art-cinema influences, using flashbacks, vision scenes, and special effects to convey subjectivity. Yang went on to make *The Alley* (1981), a film that offers three alternative endings. While Cultural Revolution policies had favored films with typed characters and clear-cut meanings, these films utilized psychological depth, symbolism, and ambiguity.

The Beijing Film Academy, closed during the Revolution, reopened in 1978 and admitted a new class into the four-year program. In 1982, the graduates, along with a few directors who worked their way up the studio ranks, formed what was known as the Fifth Generation—so called because they followed the generation of filmmakers who worked after the 1949 Communist revolution.

The young filmmakers broke with old ideas. During the Cultural Revolution, education had emphasized rote learning, mostly based on Mao's writings. Fifth Generation filmmakers, however, were not taught exactly what to think. One of the most famous graduates, Chen Kaige, recalled his education at the Film Academy: "I really appreciated my teachers because they didn't know how to teach us. They hadn't taught anybody for ten years. They were very open-minded."[4] With access to imported films, students absorbed lessons of indirect storytelling and symbolic imagery from Bergman and Fellini. By 1983, Fifth Generation films were being released.

Traditionally, each Academy graduate was permanently assigned to a studio in Beijing, Shanghai, or the provinces, but several Fifth Generation filmmakers migrated among studios. Chen Kaige was assigned to the Beijing Film Studio, but he went instead to join a fellow graduate, cinematographer Zhang Yimou, at the Guangxi studio. There they made *Yellow Earth* (1984). Tian Zhuangzhuang, also delegated to the Beijing facility, could get no directorial work, and so he went to the tiny Inner Mongolia Film Studio to make *On the Hunting Ground* (1985).

The most significant provincial facility was the Xi'an Film Studio in central China. The studio head, Wu Tianming, hired young filmmakers and gave them artistic freedom. More than a third of the Fifth Generation films were made at Xi'an. When Wu asked cinematographer Zhang Yimou to come from Guangxi to photograph *The Old Well* (1986), Zhang agreed on the condition that he would be allowed to direct. His *Red Sorghum* (1987) became the most popular Fifth Generation work, both in China and abroad.

The Fifth Generation filmmakers reacted against the ideological purity of Cultural Revolution cinema. By relocating to regional studios, they began to explore the actuality of local culture in a somewhat documentary fashion. Instead of stories depicting heroic military struggles, the films were built out of ordinary people's daily lives. Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Horse Thief* (1986), for instance, follows a horse thief and his family as they roam Tibet for a year. Tian does not explain Tibetan rituals and customs, as alien to most Chinese as to audiences abroad. The film's interest lies in its frank exoticism and in its handsome shots of barren plains, mountains, and temples.

Fifth Generation films sometimes aimed at exploring issues rather than recycling approved policy. One example was Huang Jianxin's *The Black Cannon Incident* (1985), which offers a bitter satire on bureaucracy. Finding a questionable phrase in an innocent telegram, officials fire a translator and launch a nitpicking inquiry. Huang breaks with linear storytelling by tracing the investigation through flashbacks.

While most Chinese Communist films used character types, the younger directors probed psychology along the lines of European cinema. They adopted complex plots and evocative imagery. In Chen Kaige's *King of the Children* (1987), a young man is assigned to teach at a rural school during the Cultural Revolution. Trying to inspire the students to think for themselves rather than learn by rote, he runs afoul of his superiors and is dismissed. His departure from the village is interrupted by imagery of a fire sweeping over the countryside—symbolizing either the devastation of the Cultural Revolution or the purifying effects of ending it. Such an ambiguous ending suggests the influence of art cinema. Motifs of setting and color in *King of the Children* contrast the enclosed world of the school and the vast terrain surrounding it (**Color Plate 27.22**).

Although Fifth Generation films often centered on everyday struggles in the countryside, they were considered too difficult for uneducated viewers. Even city dwellers found the films obscure, partly because China had no tradition of art cinema and no theaters catering to specialized audiences. Few Fifth Generation films did well financially, so at Xi'an, Wu Tianming produced more popularly oriented films to balance the losses. But the films of Chen, Zhang, Tian, and their contemporaries, looking more modern than traditional studio products, were appreciated overseas. The export income helped keep the filmmakers working.

The Fifth Generation films made their way into festivals and art theaters at the same time that films from Hong Kong and Taiwan did, dramatically raising the status of Asian film. Even as it was gaining fame abroad, however, the Fifth Generation encountered more difficulties at home. During late 1986, a series of student protests for greater reforms led the government to tighten control. It conducted a campaign against "bourgeois liberalization," including foreign influences. Officials demanded accessible, profitable films, in the form of the "New

Entertainment Film" (*xin yulepian*). During 1987 and 1988, some Fifth Generation filmmakers undertook more commercial projects or started working in television. The government's violent suppression of the pro-democracy movement of 1989 in Tiananmen Square brought an end to the Fifth Generation as a trend, but many of the directors would find new opportunities in the exploding economy.

The Sixth Generation and Illegal Films

The fame of the Fifth Generation brought in funding from foreign production companies, just when domestic financing swung toward more commercial projects. Well-known directors could turn to the international arthouse market. Chen Kaige made several international coproductions, notably *Farewell My Concubine* (1993) and *The Emperor and the Assassin* (1999). Under Shaw Brothers of Hong Kong, Wu Tianming, patron of the Fifth Generation, directed the poignant *King of Masks* (1996), from a Taiwanese script. Tian Zhuangzhuang found European and Hong Kong financing for *The Blue Kite* (1994), a chronicle of a mother's search for her husband across the years 1953–1967, from the Great Leap Forward to the Cultural Revolution. In bold pictorial juxtapositions, Tian questions Maoist ideology and the sacrifices it demanded of the Chinese people (**27.32**).

A younger generation came to the fore in the early 1990s. Most of these directors were not Film Academy graduates. They often became entranced with cinema by watching foreign films on pirated videos and reading translations of Western film theory. These Sixth Generation directors pursued their own visions, and overseas financing allowed them to skirt governmental control. The government did not forbid the making of independent films, but if a project was not submitted for censorship in the script stage or was not distributed by a studio, it became "unofficial" or "illegal." It would likely never be shown in China, and if it offended official sensibilities, the maker might be punished.

The Blue Kite

27.32 Mao oversees the life of the couple in *The Blue Kite.*

One of the Sixth Generation pioneers of illegal cinema was Zhang Yuan, who began his first film, *Mama* (1990), under studio auspices. After the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, he raised completion money from businesses, edited the movie in a hotel room, and persuaded the Xi'an Studio to release it. His second feature, *Beijing Bastards* (1993), traveled to festivals without any studio imprimatur. Similarly, Wang Xiaoshuai's *The Days* (1993), made underground for $14,000, was distributed abroad but not in China.

Centered on young people and social problems, Sixth Generation films lacked the regional flavor, exotic customs, and breathtaking landscapes on display in *Yellow Earth* and *Red Sorghum*. This was a cinema of contemporary urban life, moody and modern, set among young people who had to adjust to the new China. Marital difficulties were at the center of *The Days*, while Chinese rock music was on display in *Beijing Bastards*. Zhang Yuan's controversial *East Palace West Palace* (1996) portrayed Beijing's gay cruising scene.

As illegal films triumphed at festivals, the government took sterner measures, raising obstacles to coproductions and foreign investment. After Zhang Yimou's *To Live* (1994) competed at Cannes without permission, authorities demanded that any film made in China, official or not, had to pass censorship in order to be shown abroad. Because of *The Blue Kite*, Tian Zhuangzhuang was blacklisted from studio-based production for ten years. Directors were denied permission to leave the country, and the negatives of films shot in China were required to be deposited there until censors approved them. The government also began to withhold approved films from any festivals that also showed illegal films.

In a few years, these strictures were relaxed somewhat, but filmmakers remained at risk. Jiang Wen, one of China's most popular comedians, ran afoul of officialdom with his *Devils on the Doorstep* (2000). It begins as a humorous portrayal of culture clash during World War II, when a villager must hide a pair of Japanese soldiers. After the Japanese retake the village, the tone switches abruptly and an evening feast turns into a massacre. *Devils on the Doorstep* won the Jury prize at Cannes, but that seemed only to deepen Jiang's plight. As punishment for not being submitted to censors, the film was banned at home and abroad, and Jiang was shut out of work for seven years. He later returned with *The Sun Also Rises* (2007), a zestful fable set during the Cultural Revolution, and in the booming box-office years, he found huge success with the mordant comic adventure *Let the Bullets Fly* (2010).

The Cinema and "Market Socialism"

By the late 1990s, the studio system of production was finished, existing chiefly to supply facilities to independent films and foreign productions. An agency known as China Film Group controlled distribution and the import of foreign titles. The government continued to finance some big-budget "major theme" films, propaganda vehicles celebrating key moments in Chinese communism.

Directors were encouraged to create more commercial products, preferably funded by entrepreneurs. Feng Xiaogang became China's most popular filmmaker by concentrating on amusing fare showcasing the comedian Ge You. His *Be There or Be Square* (1998) centered on two mainland con men who move to a crime-ridden Los Angeles in search of the good life. Backed by private investors, the film became the second-best grossing film to date. Feng baited critics by declaring that he loved making money and scorned arthouse movies.

The shift to entertainment-based, privately funded cinema was in harmony with China's expanding market economy. The country was generating nearly a third of the world's economic growth. China took steps in the 1990s to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), which included concessions to Western governments. After emphasizing manufacturing and export-led growth, the government focused on building a consumer population.

The industry's relation to Hollywood became more complicated. US studios wanted access to the 1.3 billion Chinese, but they worried about the explosion in piracy. The arrival of digital technology enabled the rapid copying of millions of DVDs. Soon 95 percent of all DVDs sold on the mainland were pirate copies. China's leisurely enforcement of copyright would be a source of conflict with Hollywood for years. Meanwhile, Chinese exhibitors needed to lure video-gorging audiences into theaters. The stunning success of *Titanic* (1997) had shown that Hollywood could help.

In 1999, the government expanded the import quota from ten to twenty. Then a new revenue-sharing scheme was worked out, with the foreign company getting around 15 percent of the box-office take. The income was small by Western standards, given China's low ticket prices, but American companies wanted to enter this growing market by any means necessary. At the same time, exhibitors needed to upgrade the decrepit movie houses, and so foreign capital was welcomed. American, South Korean, and Taiwanese companies helped support production and upgrade exhibition.

Hero's Victories Then came *Hero* (2002). The timing was ideal. The Hong Kong/Taiwan production *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000; see Global Efforts from Asia p. 688) had proven that an expensive-looking martial-arts film could make millions worldwide. Backed by the Hollywood firm Miramax, Zhang Yimou tried to outdo *Crouching Tiger* in grandiose spectacle. A boldly unrealistic color scheme differentiated flashbacks, and CGI created vast crowds and turned swordfights into painterly abstractions (**Color Plate 27.23**). Using a quartet of stars, Zhang created the biggest-earning mainland film yet. So eager was the government to support *Hero* that it removed competing films from theaters and even managed to suppress pirated copies for a time.

Hero launched a cycle of lush costume epics by Zhang (*House of Flying Daggers*, 2004), fellow Fifth Generation veteran Chen Kaige (*The Promise*, 2005), and many other filmmakers, including John Woo, who returned from Hollywood to make the most expensive Chinese film to date, *Red Cliff* (2008). Censors approved of these safely distant imperial spectacles, and audiences were drawn to the pageantry, mild sexuality, and spectacular battle scenes.

Hero showed that release tactics could massage the market. The government began imposing "blackout periods," weeks or months in which only local pictures could be shown. It also restricted the number of copies of imported films. Thanks to such maneuvers, mainland films were assured a substantial market share.

The new *da pian* ("big film") attracted production investment, which grew to more than $100 million in 2007. A large part of the growth was due to 2003's Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), which gave Hong Kong investors preferred access to the market. Mainland–Hong Kong coproductions increased, usually coordinated by the China Film Group Corporation. The CFG controlled production facilities, a distribution company, and several theater circuits, while also having power to set release dates.

CEPA also enabled China to push back US encroachment. In 2005, Warner Bros. abandoned its theater investments, and Hong Kong companies such as Golden Harvest rushed to fill the gap. American funding had helped China upgrade its exhibition sector until the industry was mature enough to attract regional capital.

Thanks to *Hero* and its successors, Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou, the nonconformist talents of the Fifth Generation, were now the establishment. Zhang became the official filmmaker of the New China. He oversaw the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony and masterminded opera and ballet productions. He continued to make eclectic works—intimate dramas (*Coming Home*, 2014), would-be global blockbusters (*The Great Wall*, 2016), and lush swordplay sagas (*Shadow*, 2018).

The World

27.33 Young people wander through a theme park that lets them travel while staying in Beijing (*The World*).

At the other extreme, Jia Zhangke became the most visible member of the Sixth Generation. Jia first attracted attention with a realistic drama about a pickpocket, *Xiao Wu* (1997), and a year later he called for a new "amateur" cinema to counter bland commercial imitations of Hollywood. "Independent filmmakers do not care about professional conventions because this is the only way they can give themselves the freedom to work creatively."[5]

Jia's breakthrough film was *Platform* (2000). Like *The Blue Kite*, *Platform* undertakes an ambitious survey of recent Chinese history. Jia follows a provincial acting troupe across the post-Mao period, tracing how traditions erode and young people start to question their elders' authority. *Platform*'s long-take style suggested the influence of Taiwanese masters Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-hsien.

Although most of his films were banned, Jia established himself as China's outstanding new voice. He portrayed unprepared youths drifting through the confusions of globalizing China. *The World* (2004) took place in an actual theme park that replicates the Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids, and other wonders. The tangled passions and misunderstandings of the provincial young people who work there are filmed in Jia's characteristically dry, distant takes (**27.33**). *Still Life* (2006) probed a private drama set in a village about to be flooded by a gigantic dam project. It is the sort of topic that might have attracted the Fifth Generation in the 1980s, but Jia blends documentary realism with abstract compositions and computer effects that inject doses of fantasy (**Color Plate 27.24**). During the 2010s, Jia became a fixture of the international arthouse scene with poetic documentaries and critiques of Chinese society such as *A Touch of Sin* (2013) and *Ash is Purest White* (2018).

Jia and his fellow filmmakers pleaded for specialized theaters and a rating system that would protect their challenging films, but to no avail. Films were routinely recut or suppressed. *Peacock* (2005), another survey of a family's journey through recent history, went through several versions, with scenes of homosexuality deleted. Directors, some of them living overseas, found foreign money to make films about mainland life. You Le's dreamlike *Vertigo* homage *Suzhou River* (2000) and Li Yang's harsh, suspenseful *Blind Shaft* (2003) represented China to the West but were denied screenings in the country they depicted. You, banned from filming for two years after *Suzhou River*, screened *Summer Palace* (2006) at Cannes without government approval; its explicit sex scenes and footage of the Tiananmen Square protests earned him a five-year exile from production.

Films in lower-line genres could get away with more. *Baober in Love* (2003) was a zany, *Amélie*-like exercise in style. Comedies such as *Waiting Alone* (2004) and *Crazy Stone* (2006) satirized the new "princelings," spoiled offspring of well-placed government officials. The financial success of these low-budget films showed that costume epics were not the only path to success. With pictures both big and small, filmmakers could thrive on the domestic audience, which now constituted one-fifth of the world's population.

The Dragon Grows Stronger

From the 1980s onward, the Chinese government created a modern, mass-audience industry by exercising top-down control and shrewdly channeling foreign investment. Overseas money funded the building of multiplexes. Once China had modern movie theaters, production budgets were able to increase. Foreign investors were then held at arm's length so that local moguls, politically connected with national banks, could take over financing and ownership. Protectionist strategies kicked in. A quota kept American films from flooding the market, and foreign companies could not own distribution licenses or act as independent producers. In addition, the government could

manipulate the market by programming two imported blockbusters simultaneously and by forbidding Hollywood releases during the most popular moviegoing weeks. The goal was for Chinese films to win 60 percent of the box office every year.

The top-down strategy succeeded magnificently. During the 2010s, exhibition continued to boom, with box-office revenue increasing by 25 to 50 percent annually. Thousands of new screens were opening every year, fanning out from the main cities to second- and third-tier ones. Seventy-five percent of the audience was younger than thirty. These viewers, raised on the Internet, appreciated films keyed to their lifestyle. Overseas adventures and romantic comedies such as *Lost in Thailand* (2012), *Finding Mr. Right* (2013), *Breakup Buddies* (2014), and *Goodbye Mr. Loser* (2015) pushed big-budget costume pictures off the top of the charts. Sequels and spinoffs were common. The *Detective Chinatown* series (2015–2020) took its blundering heroes to Bangkok and Manhattan, through slapstick gags, absurd crimes, and comic-book special effects.

Mostly born in the 1970s and 1980s, the directors formed a "seventh generation." Unlike their predecessors, they were firmly committed to Hollywood and Hong Kong models of entertainment. Raman Hui, who codirected *Shrek the Third* (2007), migrated to the mainland and found huge success with the fantasy series *Monster Hunt* (2015). The rising popularity of Chinese science-fiction novels led to the CGI blockbuster *The Wandering Earth* (2019), from a director who admired the *Terminator* series. Homegrown animation also found success (**27.34**). Every Western genre, it seemed, had a Chinese counterpart.

To feed youthful appetites, the exhibitors needed American blockbusters as well. Superhero movies and the *Transformers* series suited 3D (more popular in China than elsewhere) and IMAX (China housed more than half of the world's IMAX screens). The government raised the annual quota for US titles and boosted revenue-sharing terms. US–China coproductions expanded, from *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) and *Iron Man 3* (2013) to *Wonder Woman* (2017) and *Venom* (2018). The Huayi company invested $250 million in a production outfit run by the directors of the *Avengers* series. As a result of these cooperative arrangements, most Hollywood blockbusters found their way into the market.

Hong Kong talent moved in as well. Jackie Chan eagerly starred in mainland vehicles, while Stephen Chow, whose films had long been popular in China, followed *Shaolin Soccer* and other 2000s hits with more record-breaking comedies. Chow's *Journey to the West* (2013) became the top-grossing Chinese film to that point, only to be surpassed by his *The Mermaid* (2016), which grossed more than a half billion dollars worldwide.

"Major theme" films lost their reputation for being stultifying propaganda vehicles after they got a Hong Kong makeover. Tsui Hark's *Taking of Tiger Mountain 3D* (2014) lured young audiences with modern CGI, spectacular action, and a prologue featuring a teenager who imagined his family's role in the 1946 Civil War. Like Hollywood directors citing classic American movies, Tsui has his characters watch the 1970 "revolutionary model performance film" (see China: Cinema and the Cultural Revolution p. 489) depicting the story in music and dance. Hong Kong veterans such as Dante Lam (*Operation Red Sea*, 2018) and Andrew Lau (*The Captain*, 2019) blended patriotic spectacle with action set-pieces.

The multiplexing strategy was crucial to expanding the audience. The new screens could take advantage of the rise of digital cinema (see Chapter 30); the equipment required little staff expertise. The key player in exhibition became the real estate company Dalian Wanda Group, led by China's richest man, Wang Jianlin. After building hundreds of shopping malls, Wang was convinced of the

Ne Zha

27.34 The Chinese demon fantasy *Ne Zha* (2019) premiered in IMAX and earned more than $700 million in ticket sales.

power of the leisure economy. Wanda went on to create China's largest theater circuit. Wang then turned to the global market. By acquiring screens in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe he forged the world's biggest theater chain.

Once the market was established, production could be regularized with modern facilities. The old studios were not up to the demands of CGI and 3D. So an enterprising farmer turned land south of Shanghai into the largest film facility in the world. Hengdian World Studio's 2,500 acres boasted a replica of Beijing's Forbidden City. Besides hosting film and television production, it attracted millions of tourists. Wang Jianlin's Wanda Studios opened in 2016, with fifteen immense sound stages and an artificial island.

China's digital media conglomerates joined the gold rush. Alibaba, an online retail and video company; Tencent, a major Internet firm; LeEco, a conglomerate that included Internet services and electronics; Baidu, a popular search engine—all became involved in film financing. They poured millions into both domestic and Hollywood projects. All tried for synergies among their many subsidiaries, from banks to instant messaging platforms.

Thanks to the immense audience and the explosion of screens, the domestic market could guarantee colossal earnings. Stephen Chow's *The Mermaid* (2015) took in $526 million on the mainland, and the action picture *Wolf Warrior II* garnered more than $800 million there. Five Chinese productions ranked in 2019's top twenty worldwide hits, chiefly on the strength of local earnings. Even the modest *I Am Not Madame Bovary* (2016), Feng Xiaogang's satire on corrupt bureaucracy, earned $70 million worldwide (**27.35**).

In 2017, the central government became worried about the scale of corporate debt and began to curtail overseas investment. Dailan Wanda incurred the most suspicion and was forced to sell off most of its hotels and theme parks. The following year, Xi Jinping was granted authority to serve as China's president for life. There followed the 2018–2019 "cold winter" of government intervention. Major stars were revealed to have dodged taxes, while the state propaganda department took control of the film and television industry. Censorship intensified, and national film festivals were forbidden to show independent and politically critical films.

I Am Not Madame Bovary

27.35 *I Am Not Madame Bovary*: a circular frame is associated with the provincial struggles of the heroine with bureaucracy. When she comes to the city to protest to party officials, the frame becomes square.

Despite signs of a box-office flattening, companies forged ahead relentlessly. Sunac, a real-estate conglomerate, took over Wanda's leadership role and pledged to build a media business on the Disney model. The tourism firm Beijing Culture moved into cinema and after a few successes invested half a billion dollars in a fantasy trilogy aiming to be the Chinese *Lord of the Rings*.

The independent sector continued to struggle, with arthouse releases finding some visibility overseas. Bi Gan, who had been converted to cinema by a viewing of Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, made *Long Day's Journey into Night* (2018), a noirish account of a man returning to his hometown. Glimmering mise-en-scène reminiscent of Wong Kar-wai is explored through slow tracking shots. The final hour consists of a single shot in 3D that winds through a labyrinth of decaying city vistas (**Color Plate 27.25**). Less flamboyant but even more demanding was *An Elephant Sitting Still* (2018) by novelist Hu Bo. Running four hours, confined to a single day, this network narrative weaves together the desperate lives of four characters.

As China launched a multibillion-dollar railway to connect eight Asian countries, it was clear that the nation had replaced Japan as the dominant regional force. In cinema, state power was becoming more centralized and local blockbusters were dominating the market. It seemed that nothing could stop the juggernaut that had been launched twenty years before.

In the years after 1970, the nations of Pacific Asia and Oceania took turns at center stage. After a burst of international recognition in the 1970s and 1980s, Australia and New Zealand became less prominent for their films than for their facilities. China replaced Japan as the major regional market, while South Korea replaced Hong Kong as the source of punchy, polished genre films.

But other factors remained constant. These national cinemas all confronted the fundamental problem of any film industry outside the United States. Should filmmakers imitate Hollywood, or strive for something keyed to local culture? All the countries we have considered found answers to this problem. What pleased the domestic audience—anime or kung-fu movies or crime thrillers or

historical epics—might travel regionally or globally. Otherwise, films with local flavor might succeed on their home ground and could wriggle into festivals and specialized cinemas abroad. South Korea, Japan, and China could hold half of their local market, but China had the further advantage of a vast population. Once thousands of multiplexes were in place, a successful Chinese film could make more domestically than most Hollywood films earned globally.

But the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in late 2019 posed a far greater threat to regional filmmakers than Hollywood did. As theaters closed and production shut down over the first three months of 2020, Asian ticket sales plummeted by 88 percent. In China, where all theaters closed during the period, hundreds of millions of consumers turned to streaming to satisfy their itch for movies. Authorities were expecting theatrical revenues to drop drastically. Remarkably, once theatres reopened, late 2020 revnues rose high enough to make China, for the first time, the world's top film market, ahead of the United States. Although China was not invulnerable, it remained Asia's biggest dragon.

Just as important, these national cinemas shared an important feature with the filmmaking traditions of Europe, Latin America, Africa, and other regions. They show that no nation, not even one as powerful as the United States, has a monopoly on cinematic creativity. However "minor" a nation may seem to be, it can foster good, even great, filmmaking. Few film industries can compete commercially with Hollywood in the realm of blockbusters. But film art, both in mass entertainment and festival cinema, can sprout and blossom anywhere.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Silvia Wong, "Evolution of an Epic," *Screen International* (November 25, 2005), 11.
2. Quoted in Patrick Frater, "Taiwanese gov't slow to cure industry ills," *Variety* (October 4, 2007), www.variety.com/article/VR1117973401.html?categoryid=13&cs=1&.
3. Quoted in Roger Ebert, "Interview with Hayao Miyazaki," *RogerEbert.com* (September 12, 2002), at http://www.rogerebert.com/interviews/hayao-miyazaki-interview.
4. Chen Kaige, "Breaking the Circle: The Cinema and Cultural Change in China," *Cinéaste* 17, no. 3 (1990): 28.
5. Jia Zhang-ke, "The Era of Amateur Cinema Is Near," in *True Variety: Funding the Art of World Cinema* (Rotterdam: International Film Festival, 2003), p. 134.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On *The Lord of the Rings*' impact on New Zealand's film industry: "Crazed Killer Sheep from New Zealand"

On Edward Yang: "A BRIGHTER SUMMER DAY: Yang and his gangs"

On Hou Hsiao-hsien: "Hou Hsiao-hsien: Film culture finally comes through"

On *The Grandmaster*: "THE GRANDMASTER: Moving forward, turning back"

On Johnnie To: "Directors: Johnnie To Kei-fung"

PART
SIX

CINEMA IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA

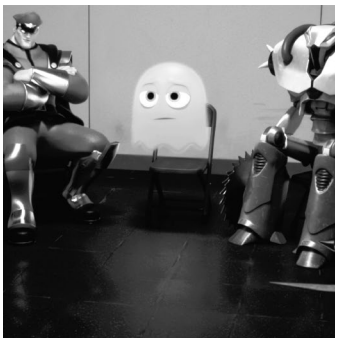
For the first half of the twentieth century, film was the dominant moving-image medium. In the 1950s, television forced filmmakers to adjust to new competition. Then, around 1980, videocassettes accustomed viewers to seeing films at their convenience. That began a cascade of new technologies that changed how films were made and consumed.

Home video, mostly developed in the United States, reshaped American cinema. At first, videotape seemed to be Hollywood's enemy, but fairly quickly the studios turned the new format into a source of vast ancillary income. Over the same period, the success of *blockbusters*, top-budget films aimed at the biggest possible audience, altered the industry's business models. At the low-budget end, ambitious independent filmmakers emerged. These developments are examined in Chapter 28.

Chapter 29 considers how cinema regained its global reach after 1980. In the silent era, films from many countries circulated widely, but the coming of sound limited international distribution somewhat. World War II and the rise of the bipolar world further blocked the flow of movies. But home video formats, along with the huge changes associated with economic globalization, enabled movies to penetrate world culture to a new degree. Hollywood's search for a "global film," the rise of film festivals and film piracy and fan communities and the Internet—these and other events made it possible for any one film, made anywhere, to become known across the planet.

The steady development of fast and cheap computing power propelled moving-image media into the digital realm. Chapter 30 considers how digital tools altered film production, distribution, and exhibition during the 1990s and 2000s. Yet for all the powerful novelty of digital technology, it was usually recruited to traditional purposes. It offered new methods of promoting and selling films, and filmmakers often used digital tools to extend traditions of photographic cinema. The rise of digital cinema displays not only striking changes but also strong historical continuities.

Birdman



Wreck-It-Ralph

CHAPTER 28

AMERICAN CINEMA AND THE ENTERTAINMENT ECONOMY: THE 1980s AND AFTER

Gravity

In the United States, the liberal social changes of the 1960s and 1970s aroused considerable opposition. Richard Nixon (US President 1969–1974) tapped into many voters' resentment of the civil rights movement, Black liberation, and the counterculture. There emerged a New Right, a loose confederation of conservatives who fought the growth of government social programs. The New Right favored fewer regulations on capitalism and believed that the best way to stimulate economic growth was to cut taxes. The debate between 1960s liberalism and 1970s conservatism would shape the coming decades.

The administration of President Ronald Reagan (1981–1989), fulfilling New Right agendas, relaxed controls on business and trimmed 1960s social programs. Although Reagan's image was tarnished by mounting federal deficits and the Iran–Contra scandal, he won credit for occupying the White House when the Soviet Union began to break with Cold War policy.

A recession at the start of the 1990s provoked voters to defeat single-term President George H. W. Bush (1989–1993). Newly elected Bill Clinton (1993–2001) eagerly made friends among the liberal elite of Hollywood. During his stay in office, a "New Economy" flourished on investment services and knowledge industries, particularly in Silicon Valley, where digital technologies were being developed. Corporate executives' salaries soared, and the bosses of media companies and film studios were rewarded richly. These high-end players exemplified the polarization of the American economy, in which wealthy households gained ever-larger income, while the wages of middle-class and poor households flattened or fell.

Clinton's successor, the conservative George W. Bush (2001–2009) oversaw one of the most massive transfers of wealth to corporations in American history. Tax cuts, slackened restrictions on media ownership, and

a growing market in equities and hedge funds provided Hollywood with favorable business conditions. For the most part, the administration of President Barack Obama (2009–2017) maintained these benefits. The hostility toward the mass media expressed by President Donald Trump (2017–2021) did not prevent him from installing a Hollywood financier as his Secretary of the Treasury. During Trump's first three years, his policies remained favorable to Wall Street, and stock indexes hit record highs. But when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in 2020, the administration failed to contain it. More than two hundred thousand Americans died in nine months. The economy cratered, and more than 40 million jobs were lost.

During all these administrations, more conglomerates acquired Hollywood firms, tying films to music and publishing subsidiaries. The blockbuster strategy that emerged in the 1970s suited the new corporate structure. So did two other ideas: synergy, coordinating business lines to maximize revenues; and franchises, continuing story worlds that could support new media products.

Although blockbusters dominated the box-office charts, the studios continued to release midrange and low-budget pictures. These releases became available to spectators on an unprecedented scale thanks to new electronic technologies. Living at the center of mass culture, Hollywood was providing "content" for media empires. At the same time, independent cinema saw a burst of creativity that captured the interest of niche audiences. The studios set up "specialty divisions" to handle films with indie flair, while fully independent production and distribution continued on the margins.

Both the new technologies and new institutions spurred an astonishing growth in output. In 1980, American production ran to fewer than 300 features, but by 2015 that number was nearly 800. Through it all, American cinema remained artistically robust. Some filmmakers built on traditional Hollywood storytelling traditions, adjusting them to the demands of the mainstream market, while others pushed toward more adventurous subjects and styles.

HOLLYWOOD, CABLE TELEVISION, AND HOME VIDEO

Hollywood after the 1970s ran along grooves laid down in previous decades. The major companies—Warner Bros., Columbia, Paramount, 20th Century Fox, Universal, MGM/UA, Disney—held power by controlling distribution. Television production was their bread and butter, but feature films were still the high-stakes side of the business, where tens of millions could be made or lost in a week.

A Major needed twelve to twenty films to distribute each year. The studio would fund a few big films, typically by paying the production company that originated the project (the *PFD*, or Production/Finance/Distribution, deal). Or a unit within the studio would propose a project for "greenlighting" by the studio chiefs. The rest of the year's slate would be acquired through straightforward purchases of completed or nearly completed films (the *negative pickup* deal). Independent distributors acquired films unlikely to interest the studios.

Movies in the Home

All industry players were forced to adjust to two new technologies. The first was cable and satellite television, which emerged in the late 1970s and increased the number of channels available to the viewer. Studios began selling film rights to HBO, Showtime, and other channels. Cable firms began financing productions or buying rights before a film was made.

A second new technology increased the viewer's choices many times over. Japan's Sony Corporation began marketing the Betamax home videocassette recorder in 1976, and Matsushita introduced its Video Home System (VHS) soon after. Sales took off in the early 1980s, and by 1988 most US households (nearly 60 million) could record and play videocassettes.

At first, Hollywood was suspicious of the videocassette. If people could tape movies from television, would they not stay home instead of going out to theaters? Worse, if videotapes were sold or rented, would people not just wait until the newest movie was available on that format? Universal and Disney sued to stop the sale of VCRs on the grounds that taping infringed copyright laws.

While the case was winding through the courts (where it ended in a victory for the VCR makers), it became clear that videotape did not hurt US theatrical attendance. Just as sales of films to broadcast television proved an unexpected blessing in the 1950s and 1960s, so movies on tape became another way for studios to earn more money.

Studios established divisions to make and distribute cassettes. Sales to rental stores, particularly the growing national chains, proved very lucrative. Although a few "budget theaters" might play a film after its initial run, cable showings and cassette rental mostly replaced the theatrical second run. In addition, video enhanced the value of the studios' libraries, so that old films could be reissued on tape. The studios found themselves in a new era, called by one historian "the ancillary eighties."[1]

The Majors also discovered that many viewers would buy video copies as well as rent them. Videocassette sales

of *Top Gun*, the box-office hit of 1986, brought in an astonishing $40 million in the first week, nearly half of what the film had earned in its entire theatrical run. Sell-through tapes yielded much fatter returns to the studios than did rentals, a lesson that was not to be forgotten with the arrival of the DVD.

By the late 1980s, video rentals and sales brought in twice the income yielded by theatrical releases. Even an average film could count on several million dollars after the theatrical release. So there was a burst of independent and low-budget productions. Although the big studio pictures garnered most theatrical revenues, the independents could do reasonably well on income from ancillary markets.

DVD Replaces VHS In the mid-1990s, stores were overstuffed with cassettes, and rental chains began to suffer losses. At the end of the decade, however, prospects brightened thanks to another innovation, the DVD (Digital Video Disc, or Digital Versatile Disc). To coax people into buying players, the format had to guarantee higher picture and sound quality than VHS could provide. Consumers could appreciate the value of upgrading home video by drawing an analogy to the music CD, which in the 1980s replaced LP vinyl discs.

Moreover, studios wanted a format that was more difficult to copy and pirate than videotape. The solution was the heavy encryption that could be programmed into a digital medium. And by establishing different formats for different regions, the studios could protect themselves from discs being shipped to countries where a film had not yet opened theatrically.

After several years of quarreling over standards, Sony–Philips and Toshiba–Time Warner merged their research to produce a five-inch digital disc that could hold a two-hour movie. Introduced at Christmas 1997, the DVD found a warm welcome. By the end of 2001, nearly 30 million hardware units and more than $9 billion worth of discs had been sold. Customers bought their favorite movies on DVD, and the new format perked up the stagnant rental trade as well. Hollywood loved the format because discs were cheaper to manufacture and ship than tape cassettes, and retail sales yielded the studios a higher percentage of income than did rentals.

DVDs attracted movie fans with such bonus features as trailers and commentary tracks. Studios compiled DVD-friendly materials during production: making-of documentaries, omitted scenes, alternate endings, storyboard images, and script pages. The DVD of *Shrek* (2001) boasted eleven hours of extra material and allowed home viewers to provide the voices for characters.

Back in the 1980s, a few film buffs had begun to fashion "home theaters" that played 12-inch laserdiscs (a high-end forerunner of the DVD) on expensive video projectors and multichannel decoders. Prices on big-screen monitors, projectors, and sound systems began to come down just as the DVD appeared on the market. The new format launched a more affordable home cinema. No wonder, then, that many in the industry foresaw digital projection in theaters as well (see Chapter 30).

By 2000, home video was yielding an annual $20 billion worldwide, three times the North American box-office income. Video penetration was virtually complete: two-thirds of all US households subscribed to cable or satellite services, and nearly 90 percent had at least one cassette or DVD player. At the same time, cable companies and broadcast networks were paying record sums for rights to blockbuster films. As movie channels proliferated in Europe, studio libraries could be recycled yet again. The DVD, the most swiftly adopted consumer electronics product in US history, was also taking off internationally. In the 2010s, that format would no longer offer big profits, but it sustained the industry for a decade.

Not everything that happened in American cinema after 1980 can be traced to the rise of cable and home video, but the new technology helped shape business practices, film styles and genres, and media culture.

CONCENTRATION AND CONSOLIDATION IN THE FILM INDUSTRY

Since the 1960s, business in Hollywood had reflected a new corporate philosophy stressing diversification. Instead of specializing in one line of products or services, managers began to see a corporation as a bundle of assets, to be assembled with an eye toward enhanced stock-market value and eventual resale.

The Majors Stay Major

In line with this philosophy, at the start of the 1980s, all the Majors except 20th Century Fox had become wings of diversified conglomerates. Warner Bros. was held by the Kinney National Company; Paramount was a division of Gulf + Western; and Universal was owned by MCA. In 1981, United Artists was folded into MGM, owned by financier Kirk Kerkorian. Coca-Cola purchased Columbia Pictures in 1982. The exception was the Walt Disney Company, but it was somewhat like a conglomerate, deriving most of its income from merchandise and theme parks.

In the early 1980s, the studios faced some competition from "Mini-Majors." These were second-tier production-distribution companies that had access to extensive financing, usually from abroad. An example was Carolco, which helped popularize the bloody action films of Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Another prominent Mini-Major was Orion, founded in 1980 by the management team who left United Artists. Orion produced many of the period's most important films (*Hannah and Her Sisters*, 1986; *The Silence of the Lambs*, 1991), and it distributed a large number of foreign, independent, and genre films.

During the video boom, Mini-Majors could compete fairly well with the studios. But eventually, they vanished or lost traction. As production costs rose, most could not match the Majors' annual output, and many had to rely on the big firms for distribution.

For example, DreamWorks SKG was founded in 1994 by Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen. Tapping hundreds of millions of dollars in investment capital, the company established hits in network television, theatrical animation (*Antz*, 1998) popcorn spectacles (*Gladiator*, 2000; *War of the Worlds*, 2005), comedies (*Meet the Parents*, 2000; *Old School*, 2003), and prestigious adult dramas (*Saving Private Ryan*, 1998; *American Beauty*, 1999). While the adult titles won major awards, the animation proved a merchandising bonanza and generated the huge *Shrek* franchise.

But DreamWorks had no global distribution arm and had to release its films through Universal and Warners. Eventually, the animation unit split off and the live-action library was purchased by Paramount. Spielberg's production unit initially partnered with Disney, then Universal.

In later years, a new and stronger Mini-Major appeared. Lionsgate gained strength by distributing *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), the *Saw* horror series (2004–2010), Tyler Perry's Madea comedy series (2006 on), *The Twilight Saga* (2010–2012), the *Hunger Games* franchise (2012–2015), the *Divergent* series (2014–2016), and *La La Land* (2016). Several of these were made by Summit Entertainment, a production company purchased by Lionsgate in 2012. Throughout the 2010s, Lionsgate's domestic market share compared favorably with that of some Majors. Like other studios, Lionsgate owned successful cable channels and television series as well.

Over the decades, the big players diversified and expanded. In the 1980s, Disney, anxious to go beyond its image of bland G-rated fare, created adult brands Touchstone Pictures and Hollywood Pictures and acquired edgy independent company Miramax. Other studios founded classics divisions such as Fox Searchlight and Sony Pictures Classics to handle foreign and independent titles.

The Search for Synergy In the mid-1980s, there was a fresh burst of mergers and purchases. The first wave of studio acquisitions, from the 1960s through the early 1980s, had been initiated largely by conglomerates who wanted to diversify their holdings. The purpose of such acquisitions was to spread risk. A bad year for the conglomerate's car rental business could be offset by stronger earnings from its parking lots and film company.

The new wave was more narrowly targeted, aimed at *synergy*—the coordination of several compatible business lines to maximize income. The more tightly diversified entertainment corporations sought a multiplier effect: a single intellectual property could generate new products in several different divisions. A new movie's marketing campaign could also cross-promote a soundtrack album, a music video, a comic book, a video game, and several kinds of merchandise.

Disney had shown for decades that a film could be exploited in television shows, toys, books, records, and theme parks, with profits accruing to each platform. Why not then hook up film companies with publishing houses, music companies, television networks, cable and satellite firms, video retailers, and other entertainment outlets? Most of the new conglomerates would not be blank-faced corporations such as Gulf + Western and Transamerica. The new conglomerates would still focus on asset management and short-term stock performance, but they would place entertainment visibly at their center. Synergy would allow characters and stories to flow across media platforms and keep the revenues within the parent firm.

Fairly quickly, the major studios became linked to entertainment empires. In 1985, News Corporation Ltd., owned by publishing magnate Rupert Murdoch, purchased 20th Century-Fox (and dropped the hyphen from the studio's name). In 1989, the Japanese electronics firm Sony Corporation, which already owned CBS Records, bought Columbia Pictures from Coca-Cola, creating Sony Pictures Entertainment. In 1994, the cable-television giant Viacom merged with the video-rental giant Blockbuster Entertainment and then acquired Paramount Communications (the renamed Gulf + Western). Instead of being absorbed, the Walt Disney Company bought the Capital Cities/ABC television network in 1995.

Some studios passed through several hands. In 1989, Time Inc., a conglomerate centered on magazine publishing and cable television, bought Warner Communications. The result was Time Warner, the world's largest multimedia conglomerate. The Internet provider America Online

purchased Time Warner in 2000. When AOL slumped, Time Warner executives reassumed control. The company had acquired the library of two other film companies: MGM and United Artists. In 2005, Time Warner sliced off those portions, and controlling interest in MGM/UA was purchased by a consortium led by Sony.

Even more complicated were the adventures of Universal. It was bought and sold by Japanese electronics firm Matsushita, then the Canadian firm Seagrams, then the French conglomerate Vivendi, and then General Electric, which renamed its media wing NBC Universal.

Through these machinations, all of Hollywood's major production-distribution companies were absorbed into global media corporations. Studios became linked to broadcast and cable TV networks, assuring the companies of distribution pipelines to consumers' homes. Moviemakers found themselves slotted alongside baseball and hockey teams, book and magazine publishers, record companies, theme parks, and websites. In this vast media mix, executives hoped, synergy would take over (see Table 28.1).

The 1970s–1980s acquisitions had come from "horizontal" conglomerates in a wide variety of businesses; the second wave had involved "vertical" conglomerates specializing in old media (television, cable, publishing). During the 2010s, American business went through yet another wave of mergers and acquisitions, and for the film industry this involved Internet delivery systems. Telecommunication companies saw integrated digital delivery of news and entertainment as the future. With the rise of Internet-based companies such as Amazon, YouTube, Facebook, and Apple, Hollywood studios were ripe for purchase.

Comcast, a broadcasting and cable conglomerate, was the largest purveyor of online service in the United States. Foreseeing the need for branded content, it purchased controlling interest in NBC Universal in 2011 and acquired the rest of the firm in 2013. Three years later, it bought DreamWorks Animation. In 2018, AT&T, another huge broadband company, completed purchase of Time Warner. America's two largest Internet providers now owned a colossal array of films, TV shows, websites, and other intellectual property to distribute across many media platforms.

The race for online presence was on. In 2019, Viacom remerged with CBS. The arrangement yielded two Internet platforms attracting 28 million users. The company also held an archive of about 140,000 television episodes and more than 3,600 films, including Paramount's libraries. Unlike other streaming giants, ViacomCBS was ready to supply content to any third-party platform.

More spectacular was Disney's purchase of 21st Century Fox in early 2019 (see Disney World Gets Bigger box). The $71 billion deal included film and television properties along with stakes in worldwide cable, satellite, and streaming entertainment. Disney enlarged its already vast catalog by adding some Marvel franchises, the original *Star Wars* films, and the planned *Avatar* series. To compete in the streaming sweepstakes, Disney created its own subscription service, Disney+. The future of the entertainment economy, all the Majors agreed, lay online.

The Blockbuster Mentality

By the early 1980s, the financial success of a film depended not only on its theatrical release but also on the ancillary markets—home video, cable, broadcast TV, soundtrack CDs, and other tie-in merchandising. "The only way movies make money 95 percent of the time is when all the markets are added up," remarked the president of Fox Filmed Entertainment.[2] But not every movie could strike sparks in the ancillaries. How to find the hits?

Some films could make money by being part of reliable genres. From the 1980s into the 2010s, horror films, action pictures, romances, and children's films moved easily from brief theatrical exposure to the home screen, where they could repay investment.

At a higher level of production were the "prestige pictures": films on important subjects, with well-known actors and established directors. Often based on literary classics, these also had a robust life in the ancillaries, and might also become "Oscar bait"—targets for year-end awards. Prestige pictures, whether made with studio investment or acquired through negative pickup, could enhance the studio's reputation and attract high-end talent to other projects.

In between were the ambitious genre films. These were mid-budget projects with significant creative talent attached and operating in recognizable genres such as romantic comedy, crime, and comedy. Romantic comedies starring Julia Roberts or Jennifer Lawrence, raucous fare such as Will Ferrell and Amy Schumer farces, and crime films featuring Bruce Willis or Denzel Washington might not rank in the top ten for the year, but these were likely to appear in the top twenty or thirty. Moreover these would have long life in aftermarkets.

So the studios offered a varied menu to the exhibitors. This allowed for a continuous flow of cash and ongoing relations with talent. But the main course on the menu, from the 1980s onward, consisted of blockbusters.

Table 28.1 Major Global Media Companies and Principal Holdings as of 2018

	TIME WARNER	WALT DISNEY COMPANY	NATIONAL AMUSEMENTS/VIACOM	SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT	21ST CENTURY FOX	COMCAST/NBC UNIVERSAL
Film production and distribution	Warner Bros., New Line	Walt Disney Studios Studios Motion Pictures, Pixar, Lucasfilm, Marvel Studios, Disney Animation, Touchstone	Paramount Pictures, Paramount Animation, United International Pictures (50%)	Columbia Pictures, TriStar, Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Pictures Animation, Affirm Films, Screen Gems, MGM/UA (50% stake)	20th Century Fox, Fox 2000, Fox Searchlight, Blue Sky Studios	Universal Pictures, DreamWorks Animation, Working Title, Focus Features, United International Pictures (50%)
Broadcast, cable, and satellite TV	CNN, HBO, CW Network, Turner Network Television, Turner Classic Movies, Cartoon Network, The CW (50%)	ABC, ESPN, Disney Channel, A&E (50%), History Channel, Lifetime, Maker Studios, local TV stations	CBS, MTV, VH1, Paramount Network, Nickelodeon, Showtime, Comedy Central, BET, The Movie Channel, Flix	Sony Pictures Television, Animax, Planet TV	Fox Broadcasting, Fox News, 20th Century Fox TV, FX, Fox Sports Media, National Geographic channels, cable services, satellite services, local TV stations	NBC, MSNBC, Bravo, SyFy, Oxygen, Weather Channel. Telemundo, USA Network
Publishing	DC Entertainment (DC Comics, Vertigo, Mad Magazine)	Capital City newspapers, magazines, Hyperion books, Marvel Comics	Simon & Schuster, Scribners, Free Press, Webster's Dictionary		Newspapers, magazines, HarperCollins, *National Geographic* magazine, Harlequin romance novels	Penguin, Putnam
Music		Walt Disney Records, Hollywood Records, Lyric Street Records		Sony Music Entertainment (Columbia, Sony, RCA, Epic)	Fox Music publishing and licensing	
Other	Warner Bros. stores, Six Flags theme parks	Merchandising, Disney theme parks and resorts, Disney stores, sports teams, Disney Cruise lines, Broadway real estate and productions	Great America and Kings Dominion theme parks, radio network	PlayStation video console, video games, consumer electronics, Sony Financial Group	Sheep farming, airlines, rugby teams, Dow Jones & Co.	Universal theme parks, real estate, video games, Philadelphia Flyers hockey franchise

Betting on Blockbusters For in-house production, studios concentrated on high-budget pictures based on well-known sources and crammed with special effects. The big money was to be found in releasing films that could "win the weekend" in thousands of theaters, run for many weeks, segue smoothly to video windows, and spin off into merchandising and other licensing arrangements—a television series, a comic book, or a video game. These movies began building buzz long before they opened and commanded coverage in news magazines and infotainment television. These were event movies, must-see films, "tentpoles." They would provide maximum synergy to their corporate parents.

Producers' faith in blockbusters was not unreasonable. Many of the biggest hits of the 1970s—*The Godfather*, *The Exorcist*, *Jaws*, and *Star Wars*—turned into cultural events, films that millions felt obliged to see. Moreover, these blockbusters revealed an unexpected range of profitability. The 1970s was the first decade in which each of the year's top ten films yielded more than $130 million at the domestic (US plus Canadian) box office. *Jaws* approached $300 million and *Star Wars*, $400 million. In addition was the bonanza of spin-off merchandise, demonstrated most forcefully by *Star Wars*.

As conglomerates took over studios, executives had less job stability, and a single bad season or picture could topple a whole regime. So big-budget films seemed to hedge risks. Hiring major stars, established writers, and a top-notch director was costly, but then the producers could not be blamed if the film failed.

There was considerable evidence that customers preferred big pictures. US movie attendance increased from 1 billion in 1980 to nearly 1.5 billion in 2000. A top ten film could collect hundreds of millions at the American box office. *Titanic* (1997) reaped a staggering $600 million.

Blockbusters sold globally as well. As people in other countries adopted American tastes in sportswear, fast food, and pop music, they also flocked to blockbusters. During the 1980s, foreign ticket sales often equaled domestic revenues, and the overseas audience grew in later decades. *Titanic*'s foreign box office came to $1.2 billion, twice its domestic gross. By the 2000s, the blockbusters' biggest audience lay outside the United States, and many films achieved profitability only thanks to foreign release.

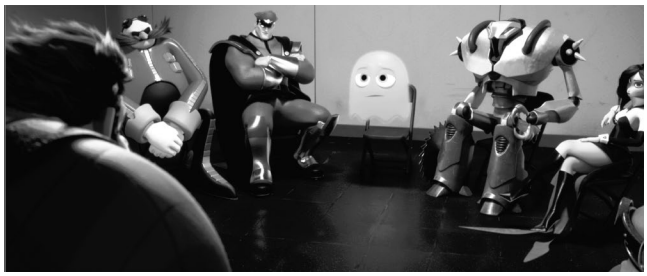
Hollywood had long realized that its prime audience, at home and abroad, was young. The 1970s successes indicated that this audience enjoyed fantasy and science fiction, horror, and lowbrow comedy. Teenagers and twentysomethings seemed to want films featuring well-known performers (including TV and pop music stars) in simple stories displaying humor, physical action, and awesome special effects. There should also be edgy violence or profanity, an aura of flippant cool, and throwaway references to TV and other movies. The tastes of this audience, who had grown up treating the shopping mall and then social media as the center of social life, would determine the bulk of Hollywood's products, both high- and low-budget, from the 1980s onward.

Jaws had revealed that if a movie targeted to this audience was released in the summer, it could garner large openings and substantial repeat business. So most blockbusters would have to open between late May and early September, when kids were out of school. Each studio began to build its schedule around a handful of "tentpole" or "locomotive" pictures, blockbusters that could open strongly in June, July, or August. By the 2010s, summer was starting as early as March.

Franchise Fever In the search for blockbusters, studios needed to manage risk. One strategy was to adapt properties already proven successful. Popular books became the basis of the *Lord of the Rings* films (2001–2003), the Harry Potter series (2001–2011), the *Hunger Games* series (2012–2015), and many other releases. Other films adapted TV shows (*Mission: Impossible*; *Star Trek*; *Transformers*), earlier films (*Ocean's Eleven*), games and toys (*G.I. Joe*, *Battleship*, *The Lego Movie*), and theme-park rides (*Pirates of the Caribbean*).

If a blockbuster found success, it could be the basis of a *franchise*, a film series with sequels and prequels featuring the same characters and story world. The strategy managed risk by offering something familiar and trusted, but with new characters or story developments. George Lucas became the master of the modern franchise with *Star Wars* and the Indiana Jones series. There were animation franchises (*Shrek*, *Despicable Me*, *Cars*) as well as genre-based ones (the *Hangover* comedies, the Bourne spy films). Many adaptations fitted smoothly into this strategy: the Harry Potter and *Hunger Games* novels were already literary franchises.

The franchise became central to Hollywood's business plan. Franchises consumed most of the studios' production spending, and every company needed two or three franchises to provide tentpole films each summer. Franchise films routinely dominated the year's box-office hits; successful originals were likely to become the basis of a franchise. Of the world's top ten box-office hits of 2016, seven were franchise titles, one was a remake, and the two originals (*Zootopia* and *The Secret Life of Pets*) would launch new franchises.


Wreck-It-Ralph

28.1 *Wreck-It Ralph* (2012), with a story set inside the world of video games, got permission to assign walk-on roles to characters from actual games.

Studios could share their branded franchises. Disney's *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) included characters from other studios' cartoon stables, and *Ready Player One* (2018) did the same with live-action characters in a Virtual Reality world. Because franchises existed in adjacent media, films could cross-promote those as well (**28.1**).

The rise of the superhero genre illustrates the power of the franchise concept. Even though superhero comic books attracted few readers, many of the characters were familiar to audiences. Studios tried out superhero franchises with a Superman series (1978–1987) and a Batman one (1989–1997). Both were successful, but not until the 2000s, with the publisher Marvel deciding to initiate film projects, did the genre start to dominate American production. The Columbia release *Spider-Man*, the world's top-grossing film of 2002, provoked Warner Bros. to revive its caped crusaders in *Batman Begins* (2005) and *Superman Returns* (2006).

The DC lineup offered straightforward corporate synergy because the comic book publisher was a branch of Time Warner. Marvel licensed characters to both Fox and Sony and later became a production unit within the Disney organization (see Disney World Gets Bigger box).

As rivalry between DC and Marvel sharpened, producers dug into the comic books for more protagonists and teamed them up. Marvel's *Avengers* films featured a couple of dozen recurring characters, including Iron Man, the Hulk, Thor, Captain America, and Spiderman. DC countered with their *Justice League* films, which joined Batman and Superman with the Flash, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and Cyborg. Through the 2010s, superhero films grew in popularity, routinely appearing among the top five global hits. By 2020, Marvel franchise films were said to have grossed more than $26 billion worldwide.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) treated twenty-three individual features released between 2008 and 2019 as episodes in a single sprawling narrative. This experiment in long-form storytelling, known as the Infinity Saga, centered on efforts to acquire six rare gems created in the origin of the Universe. The MCU relied on the meticulous mapping of many storylines, typical of comic

DISNEY WORLD GETS BIGGER

During the 2010s, most of the top grossing films were animated features or superhero sagas. An overwhelming number of those came from one company. In 2019, of the more than 7,000 films made worldwide, the five highest earners were made by Disney. It was the first studio in history to gross more than $13 billion in theaters in one year. In the United States and Canada, Disney dominated domestic box office with a market share of 38 percent, the highest in Hollywood's history.

The company had seen decades of ups and downs. Since the 1950s, Disney had coordinated its animated features and shorts, its merchandise, its TV series, and the amusement parks Disneyland and Walt Disney World. After slumps in the 1970s and 1980s (see The Studios in Crisis p. 454), the firm came back with a series of hugely successful animated films, from *The Little Mermaid* (1989) to *The Lion King* (1994). It also revived its live-action side with *Honey I Shrunk the Kids* (1989) and *The Mighty Ducks* (1992). Disney created a live-action franchise with the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series (2003 on).

While Jeffrey Katzenberg led the renaissance of the animation unit, studio head Michael Eisner oversaw a broadening of the brand through Disney stores, stage adaptations, cruises, and the Disney Channel. Katzenberg's departure was followed by several successful animated films, including *Pocahontas* (1995) and *Mulan* (1998), but the unit soon went into decline. Relying on cel animation, most Disney cartoons did not garner the revenues and acclaim earned by the Pixar titles Disney had been distributing from *Toy Story* (1995) on.

Bob Iger became Chief Executive Officer in 2005 and embraced the business strategies that characterized modern Hollywood: branding, franchising, and synergy. Instead of being acquired by a conglomerate, Disney began acquiring other companies. In 2006, Iger purchased Pixar for $7.4 billion. After failing to revive the cel-animation unit, they shifted to Pixar's style of digital animation. The new unit, now called Disney Animation, yielded such hits as *Tangled* (2010), *Frozen* (2013), *Big Hero 6* (2014), *Moana* (2016), and *Zootopia* (2016).

Disney's live-action lineup also received a boost with Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010). The film earned more than a billion dollars in global box office, and Disney initiated a series of other photorealistic remakes of their animated classics (**28.2**).

Iger was prepared to spend a lot in order to diversify. The success of Marvel comics' *Men in Black* (1997), *X-Men* (2000), and *Spider-Man* (2002) justified his decision to pay $4 billion for Marvel Entertainment in 2009. Although other studios controlled certain Marvel characters, Disney bought distribution rights to many films featuring them, including *The Avengers*, the world's top-grossing film of 2012. *Guardians of the Galaxy* was the first feature Marvel developed as a Disney subsidiary, and it became an unexpected hit.

For another $4 billion, Iger bought Lucasfilm Ltd., home of the *Star Wars* and Indiana Jones franchises, in 2012. Disney relaunched Lucasfilm's saga with *Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens* (2015), which grossed more than $2 billion worldwide.

By letting each subsidiary develop its distinctive approach, Iger sustained brand diversification. Marvel showcased neurotic, wisecracking superheroes; the *Star Wars* saga yielded pure-hearted space opera with dazzling special effects. Disney animation offered empowered heroines and ingratiating songs, while Pixar laced its touching comic fables with knowing pop-culture references.

With exhibitors dependent on intellectual properties for their survival, the studio could negotiate favorable terms for every release. Just as important, there were endless possibilities of synergy with merchandising and television shows (Marvel adventures, *Lego Star Wars*, *Star Wars: The Mandalorian*). Lucasfilm producers were exploring Virtual Reality extensions of the films, while Disney stage shows garnered billions worldwide in their own right. Any of the tales could yield new franchise possibilities, as Disney showed with *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016) and *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (2018).

When Disney's total profits in all media reached $15.7 billion in 2016, it seemed to confirm the overwhelming power of Hollywood's reliance on blockbusters, franchises, and synergy. No wonder that in the following year Iger announced plans to pull the Disney and Pixar licenses from Netflix and set up its own streaming service.[3] Disney+ launched in November 2019 and was an immediate success, gaining more than 50 million subscribers in its first six months of operations.

The most massive acquisition of all came in March 2019, when Disney completed its acquisition of assets from 21st Century Fox. Among the treasures was a vast library of classic films of all eras, some Marvel characters, the *Avatar* sequels, and the ultimate franchise, the original *Star Wars* films.

Synergy and shrewd acquisitions had made Disney the most powerful of the Majors, but the company's imperial spread made it vulnerable when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020. With movie theaters closed and the future of Disney's Parks and Resorts division uncertain, the company seemed unlikely to surpass its early peaks of profitability.

Dumbo

28.2 Tim Burton's *Dumbo* (2019) was one of the rare failures in Disney's string of photorealistic remakes. It barely earned back its production and marketing costs.

books and television but rarely found in filmmaking. To some extent, the MCU was the franchise blockbuster's version of the network narratives explored in American and international features.

The Bottom Line

Blockbusters were enormously expensive. The average costs of producing, marketing, and distributing a studio film rose from about $14 million in 1980 to more than $100 million by 2006. Most blockbusters ran well beyond the average: *Waterworld* (1995) and *Armageddon* (1998) were rumored to have cost more than $150 million; *Titanic*, $200 million. *The Dark Knight Rises* (2013), with marketing costs reckoned in, cost $375 million. The amounts invested in the blockbusters of the 2010s would have been considered ruinous only a few years before.

What inflated the costs so rapidly? Partly the need to hit release dates, often set years in advance. As problems piled up in scripting, production, and postproduction, executives had to pay more for quick fixes. In addition, the drive to create franchises meant that each installment had to be splashier than the last. The first *Spider-Man* film in 2002 had a production budget of $139 million; the second two years later cost $200 million; the 2007 installment nearly $260 million, not including advertising. And computer-generated special effects, essential to most blockbusters, could eat up half a film's budget.

Rising nearly as fast were new marketing costs. A studio blockbuster had to open everywhere in America on a single weekend, and this required nationwide promotion. Saturation advertising on television, proven effective with *Jaws*, was expensive, but many studio executives had worked in the networks and believed in blanketing the airwaves. The Internet was also far from cheap; a single day's placement on YouTube's home page cost more than $700,000.

Early in the blockbuster era, key players became aware of their profit potential. Successful screenwriters could ask $1 million or more for a script, and directors could demand a share of profits. In the 1980s, there emerged a new generation of stars, whose track records offered the best odds of winning the opening weekend. Harrison Ford, Tom Cruise, Eddie Murphy, Bruce Willis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mel Gibson, and Kevin Costner accumulated terrific bargaining power—despite the fact that all of their résumés included some flops. In the 1990s and 2000s, some of these, along with Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, and Jim Carrey, commanded $20 million per picture, often along with profit participation.

Some blockbusters did not require big stars, and as franchises came to dominate the industry, casting costs dropped. Now "the picture was the star." "Why spend extra on big names," asked one critic, "when the pictures sell themselves?"[4] Similarly, producers began hiring directors from the independent realm, who were far cheaper than A-list names. Still, budgets did not go down. If a film spawned a franchise, the actors would demand bigger salaries for the sequels. Above all, costs rose because of expensive special effects.

Bigger budgets could be justified by the return on investment. By the 2000s, with expanding markets overseas, a blockbuster could be more lucrative than ever before. Each entry in the Harry Potter franchise took in between $800 million and $1 billion internationally. The expenses of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise seemed like a good investment when the five installments harvested more than $4.5 billion. The payoff on one megahit exceeded that on any number of smaller films. And the real money came from the ancillaries, where cable and home video consumption favored top grossers.

Blockbusters worked to the advantage of the Majors in other ways. The studios typically charged distribution fees of 30 percent of the rental returns from the theaters, plus another 30 percent for advertising and print costs, and these payments were deducted before the expenses of production were paid off. A successful theatrical run might return only 15 percent of the distributor's gross rentals to the film's producer, who would probably have to share that with the creative team (writer, director, stars). Thanks to resourceful studio accounting, even such box-office champs as *Coming to America* (1988) and *Forrest Gump* (1994) never seemed to yield profits for all the participants. If the studio had invested in or initiated the blockbuster, it would receive a high percentage of ancillary income as well. The film might go out through the studio's own cable or home video arm, yielding further distribution fees and profits.

Each studio's slate of films could support only three to six blockbusters. The rest of the dozen to twenty annual releases were medium-budget items serving to fill out the schedule and groom upcoming stars, writers, and directors. And every year, a few unheralded movies unexpectedly won big box office. These "sleepers" included *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002), *Elf* (2003), *Mean Girls* (2004), *Borat* (2006), *True Grit* (2010), *American Sniper* (2014), and *Hidden Figures* (2016). When a picture became a sleeper, studios quickly offered its creators bigger budgets in the hope of new home runs.

Prime Packagers As the studios embraced blockbusters, they cultivated relationships with powerful allies who could bring them ideas, talent, or projects waiting to be funded and filmed. Executives needed reliable producers, who were often signed to studio contracts. Joel Silver created franchises for Warners (*Lethal Weapon*, *The Matrix*) and Fox (*Die Hard*). Jon Peters and Peter Guber produced a string of hits for Warners culminating in *Batman* (1989). Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer's Paramount productions *Flashdance* (1983) and *Top Gun* (1986) helped give feature films a frantic music-video look. For some decades Bruckheimer was the most powerful producer in Hollywood, with a string of hit movies and television programs.

Talent agents continued to match producers with clients who were stars, directors, or writers (see The Return of the Blockbuster p. 463). Agents skilled in packaging often took executive positions at the Majors or Mini-Majors, and others quit the business to create their own production companies. The agencies controlled most of Hollywood's talent, and, in the age of blockbusters, that translated into a great deal of power. The Creative Artists Agency (CAA) set the pace by signing up screenwriters who could create projects that would attract actors and directors. The agent would then assemble packages to be offered to producers or studio executives. In any year, several blockbusters were likely to be packages made up of CAA clients. A rival agency, Endeavor, took the next step and created its own film financing company.

Backed by private equity, agencies became powerful media companies in their own right. They invested in sports teams, fashion firms, and new technology. While American law forbade agents from functioning as producers, no such restrictions operated in China, where agencies set up ventures hoping to generate film and television content.

New Revenue Streams Because blockbusters were expensive, the studios sought new ways to use other people's money. They could finance some films by selling the foreign or video rights in advance. They might pressure exhibitors to cough up advance fees to help underwrite the project; the guarantees for *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) nearly covered the film's production costs. Alternatively, two Majors might coproduce a picture, splitting costs and territories. On *Titanic*, Paramount took the North American rights and 20th Century Fox got the foreign income. Paramount and Warners cooperated on distributing *Interstellar* (2014).

Distributors also allowed high-rolling investors to buy into a slate of promising pictures. Investment funds were established in the United States and abroad to support blockbusters. In the United Kingdom and Europe, new tax-shelter laws allowed individuals to write off movie investments, yielding hundreds of millions of dollars to Hollywood.

In the late 1990s, distributors came to rely on well-endowed production financing companies such as France's StudioCanal and Australia's Village Roadshow. Such partners might pay a large portion of the production costs, sharing in the wealth if the film became a hit. Soon banks, private-equity firms, and hedge funds, swelling with cash from the early 2000s boom, poured billions into studios' slates. Still later, as Wall Street funding slowed with the 2007 recession, Middle Eastern money came to the rescue. Oil-rich sheikhs bought portions of companies and invested in big-budget films.

Studios found other ways to offset the price of blockbusters. Runaway production returned with a vengeance. Toronto and Vancouver provided budget-friendly alternatives to Los Angeles, and studios in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe became available in the 1990s. Big productions found spacious facilities, exotic locations, well-trained technicians, low costs, and rebates in Prague, Berlin, and other European capitals. In 2007, the German government stimulated runaway productions by reimbursing up to 20 percent of the budget if a sufficient amount was spent in Germany; the Tom Cruise production of *Valkyrie* (2008) reaped more than $7 million in refunds.

Studios enhanced the bottom line through tie-in deals with brand-name products. One possibility was product placement, with the manufacturer supplying funds or items for the film. After *E. T.* (1982), when the onscreen prominence of Reese's Pieces candy pushed up sales, filmmakers wove more brands into their story lines. Product placement was integrated into *Back to the Future* (1985): the hero tries to open a 1955 Pepsi-Cola bottle, which does not have a twist-off cap. Product placement became crucial to support the budgets of blockbuster franchises (**28.3**).

Another possibility was brand partnership. Advertisements paid for by the manufacturer could promote the movie, as when James Bond films were featured in ads for beer, vodka, and automobiles. For *Shrek 2* (2004), Baskin-Robbins featured Shrek's Hot Sludge Sundaes and filled stores with cutouts of the characters. Yet another option was licensing a company to make products based on the film. Parker Brothers produced *Lord of the Rings*–themed versions of Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, and Risk.

Selling products based on the film was a long-established Hollywood practice, but blockbusters sent

Man Of Steel

28.3 *Man of Steel* (2013) showcased more than one hundred brands, including Sears, Nokia, U-Haul, Warby Parker, Budweiser, and the International House of Pancakes. Some sources claim that the product placements offset $170 million of the superhero film's $225 million production budget.

merchandising into overdrive. Often, the most lucrative licenses derived from fantasy and adventure films for the family audience. In *The Lion King*'s first year of release, its merchandise grossed more than $1 billion. The long-awaited *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008) partnered with Burger King, M&M'S candies, Hallmark greeting cards, and toys from Hasbro and Lego. The previous installments had not exploited kiddie tie-ins, but as the president of Lucas Licensing put it: "The people who grew up with Indiana Jones have become today's parents."[5]

Part of the point of synergy was to transfer a story world from platform to platform. So it was not surprising when *The Lion King* showed up on Broadway, or when films became TV shows (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Terminator*) or theme-park attractions, as with *Back to the Future* (Universal Studios) or *Avatar* (Disney World Resort). The parent company benefited from the transmedia mix.

One of the most pervasive tie-ins was the music video. MTV began cablecasting in 1981, and by 1983, it was being watched in 20 million homes. In response, filmmakers added pop songs as background music and inserted them in final credits. After a catchy video promoted *Ghostbusters* (1984) and its soundtrack album, almost any blockbuster would need a music video to be run on MTV.

Putting together all the outside investments, relying more and more on runaway productions and merchandising and brand partnering, the Majors were awash in money. This encouraged producers to mount ever-more expensive movies. But how successful was the film industry's commitment to event pictures and synergy?

Most films lost money in theatrical release, and many of those—perhaps 60 percent—were financial disasters. Inevitably, some of the losers were behemoths that would never return their costs, even with ancillary revenues. The roll call of shame included *Annie* (1982), *Cutthroat Island* (1995), *Battlefield Earth* (2000), *The Adventures of Pluto Nash* (2002), *Evan Almighty* (2007), *Battleship* (2012), *Jupiter Ascending* (2015), and *Cats* (2019). *Ben Hur* (2016) may have lost $120 million; *John Carter* (2012), more than $200 million. Successful TV shows provided a cushion for the overall company, but that was no comfort to the film executive who might be fired for backing a flop.

When a big project failed, columnists periodically declared the public sick of formulaic fare and hungry for fresh, original films. However, some analysts saw modern media as creating a "long tail," a boundless offering of entertainment for niche tastes. This would deflate blockbusters and spread consumer revenue more evenly.

Yet the public increasingly favored big hits. Social media and Google rankings steered consumers to what most others liked. With constant hammering from ads, Facebook, and Twitter, people could not escape awareness of the weekend's must-see film and had little time for other offerings. "Even the most die-hard fans will not see more than a movie a week," noted Disney executive Alan Horn. "You have to make sure it is your movie they see."[6]

Like the polarization between rich households and everyone else, the gap widened between top hits and all the other films ("higher highs and lower lows"). In the entertainment economy, the American film business depended on blockbusters and the franchises they sustained.

Multiplexing and Megaplexing: The New Face of Exhibition

The flow of production financing, reinforced by the ancillary markets, encouraged companies to turn out more films. With rising production budgets, however, pictures had to "open wide," to play every city, town, and suburb at the same moment. Yet in the early 1980s, there were not enough screens to hold the flood of

product. Worse, many theaters were antiquated. Why would people leave their television sets for sticky-floored shoeboxes jammed into malls? Theaters had to multiply and upgrade.

Exhibition had become a centralized business. The top six theater circuits owned a third of all US screens, and these yielded 85 percent of total domestic ticket sales. Spurred on by investment firms looking for a quick profit, exhibitors embarked on the biggest theater-building spree since the silent era.

Multiple-screen cinemas had emerged in the cost-cutting 1970s, when large theaters had been divided into two or three auditoriums. The new trend was to design multiplexes from scratch, aiming at size, comfort, and a coherent layout. The typical multiplex might have six to ten screens. The Canadian firm Cineplex Odeon went further and began building megaplexes, venues housing sixteen screens or more. The new theaters featured digital sound systems, plush stadium seating, and soft-drink holders. Theater construction exploded. By 2000, the United States had 38,000 screens, a new high.

Multiplexes and megaplexes created economies of scale, with a centralized box office, projection booth, and concession stand. Released on so many screens, hits could offset flops. A film could open on several screens to boost the first-weekend total, and a failing film on one screen could be replaced by a second print of a successful one. The downside was that opening on many screens during one weekend caused overall attendance to drop faster. Because exhibitors' share of the box office grew when a film had a long run, they lost out if interest faded quickly. Distributors countered that theater owners received all the income from the high-priced snacks, and opening one or two new films every weekend kept those sales turning over.

Multiplexes, as we have seen in earlier chapters, proved successful overseas too. A venue in Paris, Madrid, Shanghai, Sydney, or Mexico City would showcase blockbusters along with soft drinks, popcorn, and other American amenities.

In the United States, though, exhibitors had overbuilt. Too many 'plexes were in low-population areas, and there were not enough customers to go around. All the megaplexes wanted the same blockbusters, so in most cities and suburbs, a film would be playing on many screens all over town, further carving up the audience. Theater debt rose and stock prices tumbled. The crash came in 2000–2001, when several major exhibitors filed for bankruptcy. Companies closed their single-screen units and smaller multiplexes. In the triage, the US market shed nearly 3,000 screens.

Ten years later, after larger circuits bought up smaller ones, the exhibition sector had become more stable. Still, many observers considered the United States overscreened. Most venues were virtually empty on weekdays. Box-office receipts rose overall, but chiefly because of higher ticket prices. The audience was not expanding. Exhibitors saw their salvation in IMAX auditoriums, digital projection, 3D, and "premiumizing" houses with reclining seats, alcohol, and restaurant menus. These initiatives were designed to lure in more patrons, while justifying charging higher prices (see Chapter 30).

Most of that ticket income would flow to American films, the dominant presence in nearly every market. Given this massive exposure, the top moneymakers would enjoy still more profits in video platforms, merchandising, and other overseas ancillaries.

ARTISTIC TRENDS

Genres

Continuing trends from the 1960s, American films tested the boundaries of taste. Whatever the genre, an ordinary movie was likely to include violence, sexuality, or obscene language. When even the family-friendly Spielberg experimented with more shocking material in *Gremlins* (1984, directed by Joe Dante), and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), the MPAA rating system was revised to include a PG-13 category.

The Western and the live-action musical virtually died, but other genres became more prominent. Aided by the new frankness, the 1970s upgrading of such exploitation genres as horror, science fiction, and fantasy continued. These highly artificial and visceral genres could showcase cutting-edge special effects and could spin off into comic books, television series, and video games.

Science Fiction The 1980s saw a boom in science fiction, built largely on the stupendous popularity of the first *Star Wars* installment. There were camp exercises (*Flash Gordon*, 1980), parodies (*Spaceballs*, 1987), unfrightening alien-invasion stories (*E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, 1982; *Earth Girls Are Easy*, 1988), time-travel tales (*Back to the Future*, 1985), and continuing entries in the *Star Trek* franchise. These subgenres would persist for decades, benefiting from continuous improvements in special effects. Science-fiction premises would filter into other genres, such as romance (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, 2004; *Her*, 2013) and suspense thrillers (*The Butterfly Effect*, 2004; *Déjà Vu*, 2006; *Source Code*, 2011).

Director Ridley Scott's noir/science-fiction crossover *Blade Runner* (1982), though a box-office failure, proved to be one of the most influential films of its period. Its detailed creation of a rainy, rusty dystopia would become the norm for portrayals of the future, and its mix of cultural icons (Asian, retro American, Punk) set a new standard for film design (**Color Plate 28.1**).

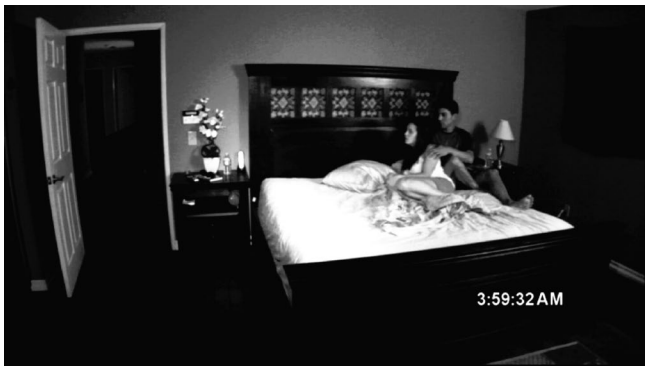
Horror Many directors of the 1970s generation continued in the horror genre; even Francis Ford Coppola had a fling with it (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*, 1992). Others made it part of their personal signature. David Cronenberg emphasized horrific deformations of the body in *Scanners* (1981), *Videodrome* (1983), and *The Fly* (1986). M. Night Shayamalan extracted a mournful anxiety from fantasy conventions in *The Sixth Sense* (1999) and *Unbreakable* (2000).

While established directors stretched the horror film in new directions, it remained a bread-and-butter genre as well. A low-budget horror film without notable stars or a renowned director could still win the weekend. This was proven in the mid-2000s, when *Saw* (2004) launched a cycle of "torture-porn" films in which the premise of teenagers in danger was taken to sadistic lengths. At the other extreme, vampire-movie conventions merged with teen romance in the *Twilight* franchise (2008–2012).

Another cycle appeared with the "found-footage" horror film (not to be confused with found-footage avant-garde films; see Experimental Compilation Film p. 441). The cycle owed a debt to *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), and with the emergence of consumer video, the premise was freshened up in *Paranormal Activity* (2009), which showed a young couple trying to capture evidence of a demon haunting their home (**28.4**). The amateurish look of the found-footage horror film made a virtue of low budgets. Shot in seven days for less than $15,000, *Paranormal Activity* was shown at festivals in 2007, polished for theatrical release in 2009, and earned nearly $200 million. It spawned a string of sequels and prequels, notable for their clever use of Facetime, Kinect video games, and other media.

Other low-budget films used the same premise. *Cloverfield* (2008) recorded a monster's attack on Manhattan, and *Chronicle* (2012) followed teenagers who discover superpowers. The found-footage films often made ingenious uses of film technique, as when early long-take scenes of *Chronicle* recorded by a single camera give way to fast-cut coverage supplied by bystanders' mobile phones.

After five decades, the horror film remained a robust attraction at all levels, from downmarket exercises to the Broadway Grand Guignol of *Sweeney Todd* (2007). Remakes of Asian horror films, such as *The Ring* (2002) and *The Grudge* (2004), also freshened up the genre's offerings. Horror proved a calling card for many beginning directors, as when Tomas Alfredson's teen-vampire film *Let the Right One In* (2008) not only earned a remake (*Let Me In*, 2010) but gave Alfredson entrée to make *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2011). Comedian Jordan Peele's first film was *Get Out* (2017), which combined horror conventions with social commentary on racial prejudice, a mixture he revisited in *Us* (2019).



28.4 In *Paranormal Activity*, the consumer video camera records a ghostly creature visiting the couple. The wide-angle lens distorts the doorframe and bed in a manner recalling the set design of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (see The German Expressionist Movement p. 87).

Comedy and Crime Comedy proved equally durable from the 1980s onward. The romantic comedy, usually star-driven, furnished many hits, such as *Tootsie* (1982), *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *Pretty Woman* (1990), *Jerry Maguire* (1995), *You've Got Mail* (1998), *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), and *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012). Romantic comedy propelled the careers of Goldie Hawn, Julia Roberts, Meg Ryan, Sandra Bullock, Reese Witherspoon, Jennifer Lawrence, and other women stars.

The farce, typified by the collaborations of Jerry and David Zucker and Jim Abrahams on *Airplane!* (1980) and *The Naked Gun* (1988), later served as a vehicle for comedians extending the Jerry Lewis tradition of spasmodic performance, such as Jim Carrey and Adam Sandler. Carrey and Sandler had begun their careers in television, which was a reliable source of comic talent, from Eddie Murphy and Bill Murray to Steve Carell and Melissa McCarthy.

A new type of youth comedy was developed in a relatively innocent form by John Hughes (*The Breakfast Club*, 1985) and Amy Heckerling (*Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, 1982; *Clueless*, 1995). Teenpix took a turn toward gross-out humor with *Animal House* (1978), *Porky's* (1981), and *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984). The raunch factor increased dramatically in twentysomething romances:

Die Hard

28.5 Racking focus for suspense in *Die Hard*: as the pseudo-terrorist turns from the cop . . .

Die Hard

28.6 . . . a shift of focus emphasizes the pistol that the terrorist has stashed on frame right (*Die Hard*).

There's Something About Mary (1998), *American Pie* (1999), and *Knocked Up* (2007). A naughty-lad cycle including *Wedding Crashers* (2005) and *The Hangover* (2009) was paralleled by *Bridesmaids* (2011), *Trainwreck* (2015), *Girls Trip* (2017), and other movies showing women behaving badly.

The neo-noir crime thriller, initiated by *Chinatown* (1974), came into its own with many exercises in lust, murder, and betrayal, including *Body Heat* (1981) and *L.A. Confidential* (1997). Serial killers became central to neo-noir because their predations could add a touch of horror or morbid fantasy, as in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Copycat* (1995), and *The Cell* (2000). Few crime films of the 2000s became blockbusters, but they filled out studio schedules in the manner of the B-picture of the studio years. Liam Neeson became the star most associated with neo-noir in *Taken* (2008), *Non-Stop* (2013), and *The Commuter* (2018).

Action and Adventure One reinvigorated genre was the action-adventure film, initially built around pneumatic stars such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone (*First Blood*, 1982, and several *Rambo* sequels). The film of heroic adventure was established as a blockbuster formula by *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and continued in such films as *The Mummy* (1999) and *National Treasure* (2004). The interracial cop-buddy picture, sparked by *48 HRS*, was sustained in the *Lethal Weapon* franchise (1987–1999) and innumerable other movies. *Die Hard* (1988) emerged as the high-water mark of the genre, with its elegant camera movement and crisp staging (**28.5**, **28.6**), while also establishing Bruce Willis as a major star.

The appeals of the action picture went back to early cinema. *Die Hard* elaborated the invasion-and-entrapment situation of *The Lonely Villa* (see D.W. Griffith and Albert Capellani: Two Early Masters of the Cinema p. 40). The early chase films (see The Beginnings of the Continuity System p. 36) and the race against time that was central to Griffith's work laid the basis for modern films based on pursuits and hairbreadth escapes.

By the 2000s, filmmakers were building action scenes as cascades of eye-popping stunts, much as Douglas Fairbanks, Harold Lloyd, and Buster Keaton had (see Genres and Directors). Each entry in Universal's *Fast and Furious* franchise (2001 on) sought to top the previous one. Cars crash through buildings, land on boats, drop from a plane, and elude a submarine on a frozen lake. Although modern action pictures relied heavily on digital effects, the actors were usually at some risk (as silent stars had been). Danger became a selling point for George Miller's *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), which achieved galvanizing moments with practical effects, planned in storyboards and executed by more than 150 stunt performers (**28.7**).

Mad Max: Fury Road

28.7 Without benefit of CGI, stunt players in *Mad Max: Fury Road* become "pole cats" attacking the fugitive truck.

Zoë Kravitz recalled, "Everything you see is really happening, there's no green screen. I'm really being pulled out of the truck and going super high in the air."[7]

The action trend revived classic genres, such as costume pictures set in ancient times (*Gladiator*; *300*, 2006) and the espionage adventure, in the long-running James Bond franchise ("rebooted" with *Casino Royale* in 2006) and the ever-popular *Mission: Impossible* series.

The demand for exciting physical action reshaped other genres. Many blockbusters of the 1980s–2000s mixed breakneck action with comedy, horror, and science-fiction elements, as in *Ghostbusters* (1984), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Independence Day* (1996), *Men in Black* (1997), and *The Dark Knight* (2008). What one critic described as the "family adventure" film became a central vehicle for summer tentpoles, especially the superhero franchises.[8] The action-based fantasy blockbuster gained prestige with the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003), which earned Academy Award recognition.

Animated Features During the 1980s and 1990s, the animated family film reestablished itself. Disney lost momentum when some of the studio's former animators broke away under the leadership of Don Bluth to make *The Secret of NIMH* (1982) and *An American Tail* (1986), the first cartoon produced by Steven Spielberg.

Disney reasserted its preeminence with *The Little Mermaid* (1989), incorporating lively songs by Howard Menken and Howard Ashman. The Disney team went further in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), in which digital techniques were applied to the sets, giving space a fresh volume and solidity (**Color Plate 28.2**). Disney's new cartoon features were aimed at all ages, offering simple stories for children, and romance and verbal comedy for teenagers. *Aladdin* (1992) used Robin Williams's free-associative patter as a basis for the genie's frenzied shape-shifting. The tuneful and splendidly designed *Lion King* (1994) became the top-grossing animated film to that date.

The triumphs of Disney and then Pixar, which came to fame with *Toy Story* in 1995, encouraged other studios to launch animation units. DreamWorks Animation, overseen by former Disney executive Jeffrey Katzenberg, built up many franchises, including *Shrek* (2001), *Madagascar* (2005), *Kung Fu Panda* (2008), and *Trolls* (2016). Sony Pictures Animation built brands on *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* (2009), *Smurfs* (2011), and *Hotel Transylvania* (2012). Universal had *Despicable Me* (2010), *The Secret Life of Pets*, and *Sing* (both 2016), while 20th Century Fox Animation launched the exceptionally profitable *Ice Age* series (2002 on). Thanks to digital technology (Chapter 30), several animated features would rocket to the top of every year's box-office revenues.

Narrative Form and Style

The storytelling conventions nurtured during the silent era had been revised but maintained during the sound era. During the 1960s and 1970s, directors influenced by European art cinema had explored more complex storytelling, but even they sought to blend techniques like unresolved endings and ambiguous character motivation with Hollywood genre and style. This tendency to update classical storytelling conventions continued through later decades.

Conventions and Innovations During the 1980s, producers began to insist that scripts contain three "acts," each lasting a certain number of minutes and containing a plot point, or pivotal change in the action. Screenwriters were pressured to begin the film with a "grabber," a moment of shocking violence or mystery, as in the opening of *Jaws*.

There also had to be a character arc, in which the protagonists changed their attitudes or personality traits. In *Tootsie*, for instance, Michael Dorsey is a gifted actor who is committed to his craft, but he treats women shabbily. In order to win a television part, he must pretend to be a woman, and in the process he learns about gender inequalities. Many Hollywood movies from the 1980s onward present a drama of improvement, in which essentially good people correct their faults.

Most films, blockbusters or not, demanded linear, propulsive plotting, but there was room for narrative innovations too. Dramas like *Jacob's Ladder* (1990) could explore intricate flashback structures. David Byrne's pseudo-documentary piece of Americana, *True Stories* (1986), saw affinities between down-home kitsch and the Postmodern avant-garde. *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* (1985), the debut of Tim Burton, was defiantly strange, hovering between kiddie-show silliness and grotesque parody of *Bicycle Thieves*.

From the 1990s onward, partly under the influence of *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and other independent films, adventurous storytelling became a major trend in studio pictures. Screenwriters could combine the three-act structure and the character arc with parallel universes (*Groundhog Day*, 1993; *The Matrix*, 1999), delusions (*Fight Club*, 1999; *A Beautiful Mind*, 2001), and supernatural endings (*The Sixth Sense*). Even fairly standard genre pictures dabbled

in misleading narration (*Wild Things*, 1998; *Identity*, 2003; *Gone Girl*, 2014).

Some genres welcomed experimental plotting and narration. Science-fiction and fantasy supplied unresolved mysteries, as in *Blade Runner*, and twisted time schemes, as in the *Back to the Future* franchise. As *2001* (1968) had challenged its audiences with events occurring in multiple time dimensions, so *Interstellar* (2014) visualized the paradoxes of Einstein's theory of relativity. An alien-invasion plot allowed *Arrival* (2016) to mislead its audience about what action was in the past and what was in the future.

Likewise, ever since the 1940s crime thrillers had indulged in tricky storytelling, so it was not surprising to find unreliable narration in *Confidence* (2003), time-juggling in *Inside Man* (2006), replayed scenes in *Vantage Point* (2008), and treacherous gaps in subjective point of view in *Side Effects* (2013). *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005) satirized neo-noir voice-over and included chapter titles harking back to crime novels ("Epilogue: Farewell, My Lovely").

In *Nashville* (1975), Robert Altman consolidated the network narrative, which traced the connections that emerge by accident among several protagonists, but only a few films had followed his lead (*Citizens Band*, 1977; *Honky Tonk Freeway*, 1981). Altman's confident reworking of the format in *Short Cuts* (1994) may have inspired a new burst of network plots, as in *Magnolia* (1999), *Crash* (2004), *Babel* (2006), and *Fast Food Nation* (2006).

Shot Design and Editing Stylistically, the classical continuity system prevailed, but it underwent some important modifications. (See Intensified Continuity: A Style for the Video Age.) Cinematographers tended to give comedies more shadows and muted, earth-tone color schemes. Drab palettes were even more apparent in dramas, action films, and science fiction, where grays, steely blues, pale browns, and shades of black dominated. Action pictures often opted for a hazy murk, facilitated by a fad for smoke on the set, which washed out hues and muddied contours. Sensitive film stocks and more powerful theater projection lamps could bring out details in shadow areas, so low-key lighting, influenced by film noir and music videos, became common. Some films, such as *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* and *Dick Tracy* (1990), used bright, saturated color schemes reminiscent of comic books and Pop Art (**Color Plate 28.3**). Similar designs were found in the "retro-Hollywood" films harking back to the 1950s and 1960s, such as *Down with Love* (2003; **Color Plate 28.4**) and *Across the Universe* (2007).

Many stylistic changes were driven, directly or indirectly, by video. Because video enhances photographic contrast, filmmakers used low-contrast color and lighting so that the video transfer would look suitably bright. The intensification of cutting and camera movement reflected the urge to hold a viewer's attention in the distracting home environment.

Throughout the production process, video devices "preformatted" the film. The 1980s saw the introduction of video assists, miniature TV cameras that relayed the image to a monitor, so the director could check composition and performance. At the same period, the time code designed to identify frames on videotape was modified to synchronize the film strip with one or more video recorders. Time-coded editing made sound mixing and rerecording much easier.

Soon film was edited on videotape and then on computer—both technologies that previewed how the movie would look on television. A top editor describes basing his decisions on the amount of detail visible on a video monitor: "The determining factor for selecting a particular shot is frequently, 'Can you register the expression in the actor's eyes?' If you can't, you will tend to use the next closer shot, even though the wider shot may be more than adequate when seen on the big screen."[9] In such ways, the practice of editing on video may have inclined filmmakers to use more close-ups and fewer long shots.

Sound Design Packed with prints of *Die Hard*, projectionists found a letter signed by the producers and the director. It included this notice:

> *Die Hard* is an action picture and it begins loud. The first two shots of Reel 1 contain the Fox Logo as well as loud airplane sounds, and it is intended to be loud. DO NOT adjust the volume level during this scene. This feature is supposed to play loud.

Die Hard's urge to galvanize its audience by the sheer force of its soundtrack was typical of the blockbuster. The newly built multiplexes boasted multiple-track sound systems for both 35 mm and 70 mm, and these expanded the frequency range. Thunderous low tones could rumble through the theater with an immersive power that recalled Cinerama and other roadshow systems of the 1950s (see See It on the Big Screen p. 289). Thanks to inexpensive stereo reproduction, as well as systems developed by Ray Dolby, the enveloping sound field available in *Star Wars* (1977) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979) could be created by every movie and played in small-town venues.

INTENSIFIED CONTINUITY: A STYLE FOR THE VIDEO AGE

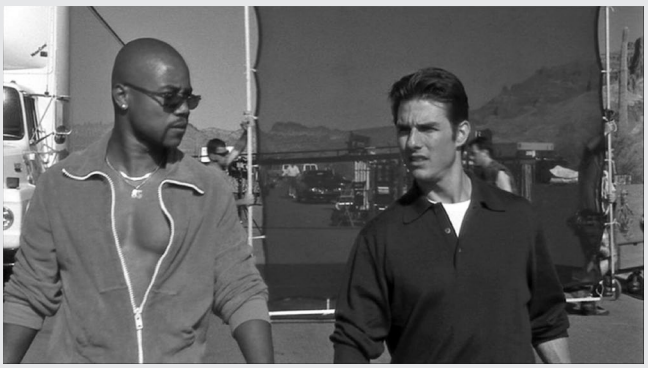
Since the late 1960s, Hollywood directors were modifying the continuity system that had been in place since the 1910s. They believed that the film's action and images had to convey a rapid pace—through cutting, character movement, or camera movement.

Before 1960, most films averaged eight to eleven seconds per shot. A trend toward faster cutting began in the 1960s, but it pushed to new limits near the century's end. By 1985, films were commonly averaging four to six seconds per shot, and in the following years many were cut still faster. *The Crow* (1994), *Braveheart* (1995), *Blade* (1998), *Armageddon* (1998), and *X-Men* (2000) averaged two to three seconds per shot. Critics complained that fast cutting, in the hands of unskilled directors, made fights and chases incomprehensible.

Although action films tended to be edited faster than others, the tempo picked up across all genres. Dramas and romantic comedies tended toward an average of three to five seconds.

Quickened editing made directors simplify their staging. Directors from the 1930s to the 1960s had often moved actors around the set in fairly full shots, saving close-ups for dramatic emphasis. But by the 1980s, directors began to favor *stand-and-deliver* staging, in which actors seldom moved around the set. Often an actor's line of dialogue would be broken into several close shots of the speaker and the listener—a major source of the accelerated cutting pace of the period. The director might provide a full establishing shot only at the scene's very end.

When actors did move freely, directors usually presented the action through an alternative to stand-and-deliver: *walk-and-talk*. Here the actors would stride along, followed in a lengthy traveling shot (**28.8**). Lighter cameras, along with the Steadicam and other flexible camera supports (see New Production and Exhibition Technologies p. 457), allowed directors to create intricately choreographed tracking shots. Because intensified continuity involved adding emphasis to the ongoing action, slow-motion became common in almost every Hollywood film.


Jerry Maguire

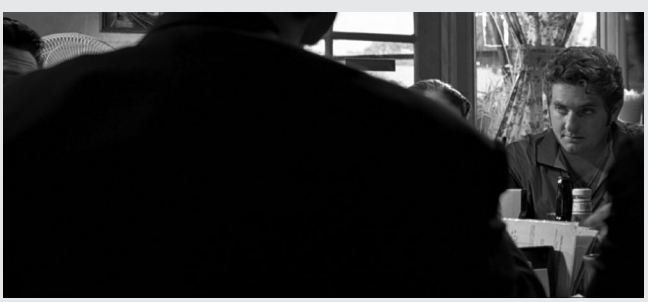
28.8 Walk-and-talk staging from *Jerry Maguire*, handled with a Steadicam.

Even when actors stayed put for stand-and-deliver, the camera was likely to move—to "push in" on a performer for a key line, or to arc around a table with two or more people present (**28.9**, **28.10**). Directors also revived the handheld camera, which was believed to pump up visual energy and suggest a raw, documentary authenticity. This was the American version of the "free camera" embraced by European directors (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 566).

Like rapid editing, the handheld suggested that something dynamic was happening at every moment. Action pictures such as *The Bourne Ultimatum* (2007) were praised for mixing bumpy framing with abrupt zooms and blink-and-you-miss-it shifts in focus or composition (**28.11**, **28.12**). Such aggressive techniques may have encouraged non-Hollywood directors to push toward the static takes and minimal movement of "slow cinema" (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 565).

Reservoir Dogs

28.9 The arcing camera in *Reservoir Dogs* (1992): As the conversation shifts among the thieves . . .


Reservoir Dogs

28.10 . . . the camera circles the table to pick up reactions.

Bourne Ultimatum

28.11 Jason Bourne pursues a gunman, and as he turns his head . . . (*The Bourne Ultimatum*)

Bourne Ultimatum

28.12 . . . his prey swiftly dodges out of sight in the distance. The perspective lines call our attention to the gunman, but his presence is not emphasized to the extent that *Die Hard*'s rack-focus technique stresses the foreground pistol (**28.5**, **28.6**). That shot aims at suspense and gives us time to notice the gun, whereas this shot demands that the audience pick up information quickly.

Rapid editing was the most prevalent change in visual style, but filmmakers also pushed the "prowling camera" to new extremes. Many directors sought to create "oners," elaborately mounted action scenes that used digital "stitching" to merge several takes into what appeared to be one continuous shot (**28.13**)

Such long takes functioned as bravura flourishes in action films, standing out against scenes reliant on faster cutting. "Oners" appeared in other genres too. Joe Wright's *Atonement* (2007) captures the siege at Dunkirk in a five-minute shot replete with soldiers stranded, civilians displaced, jeeps disabled, and horses shot to keep them from falling into enemy hands. In the 2015 drama *Creed*, director Ryan Coogler depicts Adonis' first fight in a single, hyperactive take lasting more than four minutes.

By the 2010s, some directors sought to make the long take a structuring device across entire films. For *The Revenant* (2015), Alejandro González Iñárritu used digital blending to create complex one-take scenes. Sam Mendes pushed the "oner" to its limit by making *1917* (2019) appear to be a single shot following a soldier's journey through a battle zone. The only apparent gap in continuity occurs when a bullet strikes the protagonist's helmet, and he loses consciousness.

Hollywood always had flamboyant stylists, and some filmmakers exaggerated intensified continuity through slow-motion, fast-motion, changes in film stock or color tones, split screen, and other highly visible devices. Tony Scott became the standard-bearer for such audacious artifice; in *Man on Fire* (2004), the end of a gunfight could be signaled by a blast of sound and a burst of bleached-out imagery (**Color Plate 28.5**). Downmarket genre films such as *Crank* (2006) could also stand out with eccentric elaborations of intensified continuity.

Faster cutting, more close-ups, walk-and-talk staging, and virtuoso camera movements all owed something to television style, which had to maintain viewer interest at every moment. Because most movies' ultimate venue was video, filmmakers may have adjusted their technique to the demands of home viewing. Television's pressures toward quick, flashy impact helped create a heightened, amped-up version of classical continuity.

Atomic Bomb

28.13 The seven-minute staircase fight in *Atomic Blonde* (2017) was made of many separately filmed shots merged in digital postproduction. On the set, director David Leitch and his editor worked out how they would stitch the takes together. Leitch, a former stunt coordinator, used whip pans, wipes, and body crossings to cover transitions.

Sound became strongly directional, so that offscreen noises such as footsteps or traffic gained a presence they had not had before. In a party scene, a surround track often put a buzz of chatter behind the audience. The audience was encircled by six channels, some carrying dialogue, some with music or ambient noise, and one delivering superlow frequencies. Spatialized sound could be immersive, suggesting a wraparound environment or slight variations in point of view. In *Batman Forever* (1995), when the screen position of the Batmobile changed, different engine sounds were assigned to different channels. "It gives you a sense that the car is more complex by varying the sound as you move around," noted the sound editor.[10] The new technology could also be used unrealistically, as when in Gus Van Sant's *Paranoid Park* (2007) the skateboarding protagonist is haunted by voices that float around the right and left channels. In Brad Bird's *The Incredibles 2* (2018), Jack Jack's zigzag movements in an unseen dimension are suggested by the sound of his laughter bouncing from channel to channel around the auditorium

In cutting and mixing tracks, sound editors could add reverberation and overtones, building layers of texture out of disparate sources. For *Jurassic Park*, the Tyrannosaurus Rex's inhalations were blended from the sounds of lions, seals, and dolphins, while its exhalations came from elephants and the blow-holes of whales. To amp up horror and suspense, filmmakers began to create quite unrealistic noises—sourceless throbs, whooshes, and shrieks—that functioned somewhat as a musical score but also grabbed the audience on a visceral level. Even ordinary noises became detailed beyond the needs of realism. Audiences heard the tiny creaks of a leather jacket, fingers rubbing a martini glass, even crumbs of tobacco catching fire in a cigarette.

It was not, then, only about playing loud. Even *Die Hard* modulated its sound levels and thinned its textures, cutting from whining power tools to string quartet music and highlighting a shower of broken glass. Nonetheless, part of the point of digital reproduction was sheer shock and awe. Older viewers complained, huddling in the back, but young ones sought the sweet spot, those central seats that would be blasted from all sides—what sound mixers called the firehose effect. If intensified continuity gave the screen the visual flutter and wow of a light show, the new sound systems made movies akin to rock concerts.

Directors: Midrange Options and Blockbuster Obligations

Opportunities for New Directors Now that the Majors, their "specialty divisions," the Mini-Majors, and the independents were turning out so many movies, opportunities opened for new directors. Screenwriters could start directing, as did Barry Levinson (*Diner*, 1982; *Rain Man*), Lawrence Kasdan (*The Big Chill*, 1983; *Silverado*, 1985), and Oliver Stone. Such actors as Barbra Streisand, Robert Redford, Danny De Vito, Mel Gibson, Ron Howard, and Jodie Foster also turned to directing, reflecting the stars' bargaining power.

The expansion of production helped marginal filmmakers gain footholds in Hollywood. For almost the first time since the silent era, major films were directed by women. Amy Heckerling (*Fast Times in Ridgemont High*, 1982; *Clueless*, 1995), Martha Coolidge (*Valley Girl*, 1983), Penny Marshall (*Big*, 1988; *A League of Their Own*, 1992), Penelope Spheeris (*Wayne's World*, 1992), and Nora Ephron (*Sleepless in Seattle*, 1993) established careers in the "New New Hollywood." Usually, female directors were restricted to romantic comedies and family films, but occasionally one might take on an action picture. Kathryn Bigelow gained fame with crime films and war stories (*Point Break*, 1993; *The Hurt Locker*, 2008), while Patty Jenkins made a grim true-crime picture (*Monster*, 2003) and a successful superhero entry (*Wonder Woman*, 2017). Marielle Heller gained acclaim for quirky biopics, such as *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* (2018) and *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* (2019).

During the 1990s, several African American directors were creating wide-release pictures, such as John Singleton's *Boyz N the Hood* (1991), the Hughes brothers' *Menace II Society* (1993), and Forest Whitaker's *Waiting to Exhale* (1996). Black women became studio directors with *A Dry White Season* (1989, Euzhan Palcy) and *I Like It Like That* (1994, Darnell Martin).

Ryan Coogler earned plaudits for *Fruitvale Station* (2013), his low-budget drama about a Black commuter fatally shot by police. He quickly joined Hollywood's A-list on the strength of two franchise films: *Creed* (2015), the seventh film in the *Rocky* series, and *Black Panther* (2018), based on the Marvel Comics character. The rapper Ice Cube built a reliable brand as both actor and producer in *Friday* (1995), *Barbershop* (2002), and *Are We There Yet?* (2005). Just as entrepreneurial was playwright Tyler Perry, who developed a strong relation with Mini-Major Lionsgate. Perry's directorial debut, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* (2005), cost only $5 million but grossed more than $50 million. By speaking to the African American community's tastes and pretesting material in touring stage shows, Perry's films succeeded in initial release and on DVD. His delight in theatricality—he played his major character, Madea, in drag—was central to his appeal.

Other sources of new talent lay in adjacent media. From Ridley Scott to Michael Bay, a great many A-list directors began in television commercials. Brett Ratner, McG, and Tarsem Singh proved their mettle on MTV. In addition, the Majors brought in talent from overseas—mostly from English-speaking countries but also from Germany, France, Spain, Mexico, South Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong.

Several of these directors made their marks with middle-range prestige projects that allowed them to define a distinct personality. Oliver Stone is a vivid instance. Gifted with a flair for promoting both his films and himself, he pulled top stars to controversial topics: America's new business climate (*Wall Street*, 1987), the legacy of the Vietnam War (*Born on the Fourth of July*, 1988), presidential history (*JFK*, 1991; *Nixon*, 1995; *W.*, 2008), the power of the media (*Natural Born Killers*, 1994), and government surveillance (*Snowden*, 2016).

Working the talk-show circuit, Stone made his name synonymous with passionate social-problem filmmaking. His films were flamboyant and jarring. Rapidly cut, full of jolting camera movements, they mixed color with black-and-white footage, 35 mm with super 8 mm, and naturalistic shooting with outrageous special effects (**Color Plate 28.6**). For *Natural Born Killers*, the actors sometimes filmed scenes themselves. Yet Stone also worked pragmatically, building stadium signs to allow product placement in the football drama *Any Given Sunday* (2000).

Another director working in prominent midrange pictures was Spike Lee. Race, Lee remarked, was "America's biggest problem, always has been (since we got off the boat), always will be."[11] He often addressed his films to Black audiences, using "Wake up!" as a signature line to emphasize the need to take the initiative in solving African Americans' problems. *School Daze* (1988) is a drama-musical about life in a traditionally Black college. *Mo' Better Blues* (1990) centers on jazz as a business and a way of life, and *Jungle Fever* (1991) deals with interracial romance. *Malcolm X* (1992), a biography of the Black Muslim leader, was scaled as an event movie and required complicated historical recreations. *Do The Right Thing* (1989), which many regard as Lee's masterpiece, offers a panoramic portrayal of racial and sexual tensions in a Brooklyn neighborhood in a single day (**Video 28.1**). He constantly experimented with color schemes (**Color Plate 28.7**), camerawork (distorting lenses in *Crooklyn*, 1994), and sound; in *25th Hour* (2002), Lee evokes the sensation of being on a dance floor by flitting the sounds of a DJ's "scratching" back and forth in the auditorium's rear surround channels.

Michael Mann likewise worked in the prestige-picture zone, but with a strong commitment to classic genres. Refusing to woo the teen audience, he crafted traditional films of unusual purity: the crime pieces *Thief* (1981), *Manhunter* (1986), and *Heat* (1995); the romantic historical adventure *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992); the social-problem exposé *The Insider* (1999). In the 1990s, Mann cultivated a spare, cool style, turning characters' surroundings into abstract color designs (**Color Plate 28.8**). He integrated his brand of stylized realism with new digital technology—mini-DV cameras for the fight scenes of *Ali* (2001), high-definition video for the neo-noirs *Collateral* (2004) and *Miami Vice* (2006). The latter two films were big-budget items, but they minimized spectacle in favor of slow-building drama.

By the 2010s, Mann, Stone, Lee, and other major directors were failing to score hits. Even their prestige projects did not find much support. Mann turned to television, while Lee became an important documentarist with his study of a church bombing (*4 Little Girls*, 1997), his tribute to Black entertainers (*The Original Kings of Comedy*, 2000), and his epic cable TV documentary on the flooding of New Orleans, *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* (2006). While his peers remained sidelined, Lee regained a theatrical audience at the end of the decade. *BlacKKKlansman* dramatized the experiences of an African American policeman who infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan. The film proved a hit, won the Grand Prix at Cannes, and earned a Best Picture Oscar nomination.

The realm of the auteur prestige picture was not dead, however. Coming from the independent sector, Joel and Ethan Coen were committed to giving high-end genre pictures their own mordant signature. On midrange budgets, they favored crime thrillers and zany, almost throwaway comedies. They offered hyperbolic versions of film noir (*Blood Simple*, 1984), screwball comedy (*Raising Arizona*, 1987), the Warners gangster film (*Miller's Crossing*, 1989), and the Capraesque success story (*The Hudsucker Proxy*, 1994). They achieved crossover success with the regional kidnapping story *Fargo* (1996) and the ingratiating tribute to bluegrass music, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), its very title a tribute to Preston Sturges (see New Directors p. 200). The brothers' stoner mystery *The Big Lebowski* (1998), though a financial failure on release, spawned a worldwide fan following.

Early Coen films cultivate comic-book visuals (**28.14**), but they restrained themselves in the grim, meticulous adaptation *No Country for Old Men* (2007), in their elegiac Western remake *True Grit* (2010), and in their character study of a failed folk musician *Inside Llewyn Davis* (2013).

The Hudsucker Proxy

28.14 A failed executive finds that jumping through a skyscraper window is not as easy as he had thought (*The Hudsucker Proxy*).

Birdman

28.15 *Birdman*: a franchise superhero haunts the actor who plays him.

Yet they could still indulge their love of old Hollywood with the political farce *Hail, Caesar!* (2016), which included parodies of studio love scenes and musical numbers.

More consistent in tone was the Mexican émigré Alejandro González Iñárritu. After the impact of *Amores perros* (see Reygadas and The Three Amigos p. 599), he made the network narratives *21 Grams* (2003) and *Babel* (2006). *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (2014) is well outside the realm of the blockbuster, but Iñárritu comments on the superhero genre by centering on a disaffected movie star who wants to break out of his caped-crusader role (**28.15**). The wilderness adventure *The Revenant* (2015) featured Leonardo DiCaprio, one of Hollywood's biggest stars. Showered with acclaim and awards—including two Best Director Oscars in a row—Iñárritu proved that carefully conceived prestige pictures still had a chance in the blockbuster era.

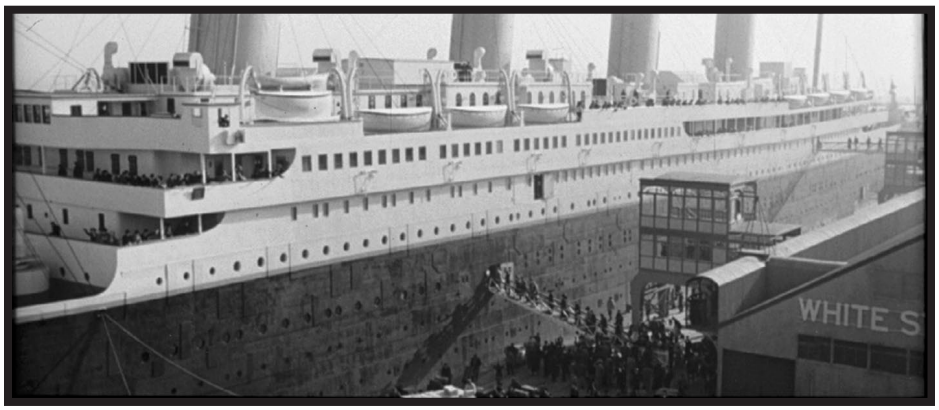
Embracing Blockbusters Steven Spielberg and George Lucas were the only directors to make top ten films in each decade from the 1970s to the 2000s. Nearly all the major 1970s directors, from Woody Allen and Robert Altman to Brian De Palma and Clint Eastwood, were outstripped at the box office by newer names willing to turn out franchise pictures. Leaving risk-taking to the independent sector, Hollywood wanted movies to be dominated by branded content, special effects, and recognizable narrative conventions—ideally, in a synergy-friendly package. It helped if the filmmaker was already a fan of fantasy and science fiction.

James Cameron was perfectly suited to these new demands. Beginning in special-effects jobs, he became adept at every phase of the filmmaking process, from scriptwriting to editing and sound. Science fiction and fantasy came naturally to him, and he realized that a successful film could be built around nonstop physical action.

His breakthrough, *The Terminator* (1984), displayed ingenious chases and gunplay, sketching in its time-travel premise without halting the breathless pace. *The Terminator* proved that Cameron could squeeze high quality out of a small budget while yielding catchphrase dialogue ("I'll be back," "Come with me if you want to live") and a career-making performance from robotic Arnold Schwarzenegger. *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), with even more grandiose action set-pieces, pushed computer-generated visual effects to new levels in the presentation of a liquefying Terminator (**Color Plate 28.9**).

Cameron was comfortable with sequels and spin-offs, injecting adrenaline into every plot. With *Titanic*, Cameron produced the ideal date movie: doomed love between a spunky heroine and a boyish hero, a long prologue featuring high-tech gadgetry, and a climax packed with action, suspense, and visual effects (**28.16**). Opening on nearly 2,700 screens, *Titanic* played for months, sometimes increasing its audience from week to week. Although the production had cost $200 million, one of the studios backing it profited by at least $500 million.

An action movie turned into a prestige picture, *Titanic* reaffirmed Hollywood's faith in blockbusters. Over the next dozen years, Cameron pursued further cutting-edge technology, making a 3D documentary for IMAX as preparation for a feature, *Avatar* (2009), which became another bonanza. Understanding the need for franchises, Cameron confidently promised four sequels.



Titanic

28.16 Digital special effects create the ill-fated *Titanic* at dockside.

Forrest Gump

28.17 Digital compositing inserts Forrest Gump into a Kennedy photo opportunity (*Forrest Gump*).

Cameron's faith in high-tech filmmaking was paralleled in the career of Robert Zemeckis, who mounted blockbusters that blended live action with animation (*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, 1988; see Color Plate 22.8), inserted contemporary actors into historical footage (*Forrest Gump*, **28.17**), and created 3D warriors (*Beowulf*, 2007). Peter Jackson (the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy; *King Kong*, 2006), Lana and Lilly Wachowski (the *Matrix* trilogy), Zack Snyder (*300*), and other younger directors utilized digital technology to give fantasy and action-adventure pictures a new scale and impact.

Christopher Nolan was a child of the blockbuster era. He saw the first installment of *Star Wars* at age seven, and that inspired him to make 8 mm films. His penchant for film noir and nonlinear narrative was evident in his first feature, *Following* (1998), his breakthrough independent film *Memento* (2000), and *The Prestige* (2006), an intricate story of dueling magicians. After the midrange thriller *Insomnia* (2002) proved he could make a studio picture, he was charged with rebooting the DC Batman franchise.

Nolan was firmly in sync with modern Hollywood, asserting his "absolute confidence that a return to the old school 70s blockbusters that I grew up with would be the key to bringing Batman back."[12] The two *Spider-Man* entries of 2002 and 2004 had been light-hearted compared to the grim gravitas of *Batman Begins* (2005), *The Dark Knight* (2008), and *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012). The trilogy legitimized the comic-book movie, earning praise from serious critics and nearly $2.5 billion from the world's audiences.

Nolan was now in a position to make a "personal blockbuster"—not a superhero film or a franchise entry, but an original story about how a person's unconscious mind could be invaded by an outside force. Stuffing dreams within dreams within dreams, *Inception* (2010) seemed closer to experimental film than Hollywood. But Nolan took care to anchor his plot in the conventions of the heist film, and the special effects were as persuasive as any fantasy fan could want (**28.18**; **Video 28.2**). This intellectually strenuous tale grossed more than $800 million worldwide and established Nolan as a filmmaker who could blend original ideas with mass-audience appeals.

That reputation was cemented with *Interstellar* (2014), which dramatized the theory of relativity by

Inception

28.18 *Inception:* blockbuster visuals embody a fantasy premise: a fight in a dream.

Beetlejuice

28.19 Tim Burton makes Beetlejuice (aka Betelgeuse) a cross between a ghoul and a circus clown (*Beetlejuice*).

showing an astronaut who, thanks to a black hole, can revisit Earth and travel through time. *Dunkirk* (2017) turned a massive World War II military retreat into an event film that, like all Nolan's non-franchise projects, boldly manipulated story time. By now, critics expected a Nolan project to be both a sophisticated genre film and a prestige picture. It would float intriguing ideas about science or history and offer experiments in film form. Not incidentally, it was likely to earn hundreds of million dollars at the global box office.

Back and Forth "One for them, one for me" was a slogan that pervaded the blockbuster era. A recognized director could tackle a big-budget project, and if it was successful a more personal project could find funding. This was the strategy pursued by Steven Soderbergh and Tim Burton.

Like Spike Lee and Christopher Nolan, Soderbergh first found success in the independent sector. After a string of small-scale films failed to find an audience, Soderbergh moved to the mainstream with *Out of Sight* (1998), a breezy crime caper. This gave Soderbergh the opportunity to direct *Erin Brockovich* and *Traffic* (both 2000), both of which were garlanded with Academy Awards. Soderbergh was now a reliable commercial director, a status he cemented with *Ocean's Eleven* (2001) and its sequels. "I was in my apprenticeship for some time and I guess I'm now finally open for business."[13]

Yet Soderbergh alternated mainstream hits with offbeat projects. *Full Frontal* (2002) was a time-warping satire of the movie industry, while *Solaris* (2002) offered a somber remake of Tarkovsky's 1972 classic. *Bubble* (2005), shot entirely with nonactors on digital video, was a small-town drama that pioneered simultaneous release on film, pay-per-view, and DVD. For *The Good German* (2006), Soderbergh sought to replicate the look of 1940s film noir.

Acting as his own cinematographer and editor, fraternizing with the Hollywood glitterati but still eager to pursue movies with very narrow appeal, Soderbergh displayed a unique mixture of energy, business sense, and artistic ambition. Sometimes on the fringes of Hollywood, sometimes firmly within it, Soderbergh showed how a filmmaker could survive for thirty years by mixing blockbusters and indie projects.

Also steering between big-budget and lower-priced projects was Tim Burton. Of all the Hollywood talents of the 1980s and 1990s, Burton created the most distinctive visual world. He filled familiar American landscapes with grotesque, absurdist imagery. The New England town in *Beetlejuice* (1988), a haven for yuppies and bored Manhattan gentry, harbors a clownish but dangerous "bio-exorcist" (**28.19**). The suburbia of *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) is invaded by an awkward young monster resembling a Goth rocker. The trailer parks and Las Vegas streets of *Mars Attacks!* (1996) fall prey to ruthless, brainy aliens who can be stopped only by the yodeling of Slim Whitman.

Burton started as an animator, and he never stopped seeing human beings as cartoon characters or puppets, so the rise of special-effects-driven movies favored his talents. He was drawn to perverse exercises such as *Ed Wood* (1994), a celebration of "the world's worst director," and he wrote and produced *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993, Henry Selick), full of astringent songs and unsettling gags (a little boy finds a python under his Christmas tree). He also tried more intimate films that toned down the grotesquerie, such as *Big Fish* (2003) and *Big Eyes* (2014). And Burton was careful to establish himself as bankable with lucrative blockbusters such as *Batman* (1989), *Planet of the Apes* (2001), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005), and *Alice in Wonderland* (2010).

Gravity

28.20 In the thirteen-minute opening shot of *Gravity*, an intricately swirling 3D camera conveys the sense of floating in space.

Stranger than Paradise

28.21 Hipsters hanging out in *Stranger Than Paradise*.

Two Mexican émigrés showed the range of options available to studio-based directors. Guillermo del Toro enthusiastically embraced low-end genres. A fan of pulp fiction, comics, and classic fantasy, he worked in special effects before making his reputation with the Mexican horror film *Cronos* (1993). In America, he made the fantasy *Mimic* (1997) and the comic-book movies *Blade II* (2002) and two *Hellboy* installments (2004, 2008). After the Spanish *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006; see Reygadas and The Three Amigos p. 600), he did script work on the *Hobbit* franchise while launching the ambitious blockbuster *Pacific Rim* (2013) and the Gothic *Crimson Peak* (2015). He won acclaim for another mid-budget creature fantasy, *The Shape of Water* (2017).

Del Toro's friend Alfonso Cuarón had a similar range. He directed two American films before returning to Mexico for *Y Tu Mamá Tambien* (2001; see Reygadas and The Three Amigos p. 599). Its success in the United States led Cuarón into blockbuster territory when he was hired to direct *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), the most somber installment in the franchise.

With the harsh futuristic exercise *Children of Men* (2005), Cuarón established his signature style of long takes and complex camera movements. He returned to big-budget territory with *Gravity* (2013; **28.20**), a rigorous lost-in-space story that was recognized as one of the most innovative 3D films yet made. Like *Inception*, it was a prestigious genre picture that achieved blockbuster acclaim. While their friend Alejandro González Iñárritu cultivated an Americanized art cinema, del Toro and Cuarón moved between that realm and the upper reaches of studio event pictures.

A NEW AGE OF INDEPENDENT CINEMA

In 1984, a grainy, bleached-out black-and-white film made for $110,000 became the emblem of a new trend in US filmmaking. It seemed to reject just about everything that Spielberg–Lucas Hollywood stood for.

Its tempo was slow. Every scene consisted of a single shot, usually a static one. In place of a sumptuous score, the soundtrack mixed discordant string music with the wailing beat of Screamin' Jay Hawkins. There were no stars, and the actors' performances were dry and deadpan. The plot, broken into three long parts, seemed utterly undramatic. Two men in Sinatra fedoras meet a young woman who has just arrived from Hungary. They float and drift, mostly quarrelling or playing cards. They hang out in Manhattan, then in Cleveland, and finally in a Florida motel, where they get caught up in a drug deal (**28.21**).

Yet this understated chamber drama/road movie proved strangely compelling. The director, Jim Jarmusch, finished the first section as a short film but after strong festival screenings in Europe, he found enough funding to spin the tale out to two more parts. As a full-length feature, *Stranger Than Paradise* won the prize for best first film at the Cannes film festival. The National Society of Film Critics named it the best film of the year, and it grossed more than $2 million in American theaters.

In its static visuals and dedramatized approach to its characters, *Stranger Than Paradise* recalled the European art cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, a tradition that Jarmusch (who studied filmmaking at NYU) knew well. His portrayal of cool bohemians also recalled Beat cinema of the 1950s. Yet in its respectful treatment of people struggling to hide their emotions, his film had an affinity with Robert Bresson, Yasujiro Ozu, and other minimalist masters whom Jarmusch admired. Still, *Stranger Than Paradise* was more than the sum of its influences, bringing a tone of ironic affection to the post-Punk New York scene.

Five years later, Cannes gave its top prize to an American film called *sex, lies, and videotape* (1989). A husband is having an affair with the sister of his slightly

sex, lies, and videotape

28.22 The disturbingly passive hero of *sex, lies, and videotape* records women's sexual confessions.

neurotic wife: so far, a standard domestic melodrama. But into the triangle comes the husband's old friend, who confesses that he records women's sexual fantasies on video and masturbates while replaying them. Gradually, the sisters are drawn toward him, and his boyish passivity becomes a challenge to the swaggering husband.

In technique, Steven Soderbergh's film displayed a Hollywood polish, but the clever psychodrama pushed sexual frankness beyond what the Majors would have allowed (**28.22**). When *sex, lies, and videotape* grossed nearly $100 million in worldwide theatrical release, even Hollywood had to acknowledge that something big was happening.

The films of Jarmusch and Soderbergh were only the most outstanding successes. *Eraserhead* (1978), *Return of the Secaucus Seven* (1980), *Polyester* (1981), *Blood Simple* (1984), *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985), *Trouble in Mind* (1985), and other offbeat, low-budget movies showed that American cinema was more than action pictures and franchises. In the mid-1980s, a new age of independent film arrived, and it would have as strong an impact on film history as the blockbuster mentality had.

Indie Aesthetics

The United States had a long history of films made outside the studio system, but not until the 1980s did they emerge as a distinct, potent force. While studios embraced blockbusters, audiences who wanted something different realized that off-Hollywood films offered more intimate stories, more realistic presentation, and more frankness about sex, race, religion, and other controversial matters. The films also explored challenging methods of storytelling. Yet in many respects, this "indie" cinema was dependent on the mainstream—for genres, for stars, and for techniques. Eventually, many indie talents would wind up working for the studios.

In several ways, *Stranger than Paradise* and *sex, lies, and videotape* defined two impulses within US independent cinema. On the one side was the pull toward an Americanized art cinema; on the other side was the attraction of recognizable genres. This tendency had been seen in the 1970s, in the work of Woody Allen, Robert Altman, and many others, so it is not surprising that some indie filmmakers drew inspiration from that earlier period of off-Hollywood filmmaking. Ironically, Allen and Altman became independents themselves at later phases of their careers.

Retro-Hollywood The least challenging strain of independent films revisited Hollywood tradition straightforwardly. As studios focused on special-effects extravaganzas, action pictures, star-driven melodramas and romances, and gross-out comedy, several genres dropped by the wayside. Independent filmmakers were prepared to take up the slack.

There were gaps to fill at all levels. Most Majors failed to exploit the low-budget horror trend, and so the Mini-Majors and smaller players could build profitable franchises around *The Evil Dead* (1983), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), *Scream* (1996), *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1997), *Final Destination* (2000), and *Saw* (2004). Eventually, the Majors acquired and developed horror franchises as well, such as *Paranormal Activity* (2007 on) and *The Conjuring* (2013 on).

After the 1960s crisis, Hollywood had largely abandoned historical drama and literary adaptations, but such items did well on video and suited midrange budgets. Director James Ivory and his producer Ismail Merchant had made small, urbane films since the 1960s, but the new market enabled them to create prestigious adaptations of novels (*The Bostonians*, 1984; *Howards End*, 1992; *The Remains of the Day*, 1993). Later examples by other producers were *The English Patient* (1996), *12 Years a Slave* (2013), and *Little Women* (2019) (**Video 28.3**). Top stars (Alec Baldwin and Al Pacino for *Glengarry Glen Ross*, 1992; Dustin Hoffman for *American Buffalo*, 1996) sacrificed pay to be in high-quality stage adaptations. Others, such as Nicole Kidman (*Rabbit Hole*, 2010) and Denzel Washington (*Fences*, 2016), turned prize-winning plays into personal passion projects. Kelly Reichardt adapted short stories and a novel by Jon Raymond as spare, poignant films (*Old Joy*, 2006; *Meek's Cutoff*, 2010; *First Cow*, 2019).

Another neglected niche was the 1970s brand of social realism seen in *Mean Streets* (1973) and *Norma Rae* (1979). Several independent directors pursued this option. Lizzie Borden's *Working Girls* (1986) offered a bleak but sympathetic portrayal of women in the sex industry. Gus Van Sant mixed seedy realism and film-noir stylization in *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989) and *My Own Private*

Idaho (1991), a gay/grunge road movie. Brutal realism reminiscent of *Panic in Needle Park* (1971) was evident in *Heaven Knows What* (2014), a drama of homeless drug addicts in Manhattan. Eliza Hittman's *Never Rarely Sometimes Always* (2020) portrays the journey of a teenage girl crossing state lines to seek an abortion.

Genre Revisions Genres are central to all American commercial cinema, and most independent directors followed the path of *sex, lies, and videotape*: they offered personal variants on familiar genres. Thanks to this effort, several filmmakers achieved fame, gaining auteur status and worldwide fame (see Indie Auteurs: Low-Budget Branding box).

INDIE AUTEURS: LOW-BUDGET BRANDING

Independent companies marketed their most distinctive filmmakers through auteur premises. One producer claimed, "I'm in the business of selling directors."[14] Three examples show how powerful the auteur idea could be when American directors put their personal stamp on traditional genres.

After the avant-garde midnight movie *Eraserhead* (1978), the tender adaptation *The Elephant Man* (1980), and the big-budget science-fiction epic *Dune* (1984), David Lynch made one of the most disquieting films of the decade. *Blue Velvet* (1986) was a small-town murder mystery wrapped around a young man's sexual curiosity (**Color Plate 28.10**). Nighttime scenes of erotic obsession alternate with sunny picket-fence normality. At the center of it all stands a voyeuristic college boy, a femme fatale nightclub singer, and a terrifying bully who inhales a mysterious drug through a mask.

Blue Velvet revitalized Lynch's career and opened up the dread-filled provincial landscape he explored in the television series *Twin Peaks* (1990–1991). *Lost Highway* (1997), *Mulholland Drive* (2001), and *Inland Empire* (2006) were more openly surreal, conjuring up dream worlds and parallel time schemes and recalling the hallucinatory experimentalism of *Eraserhead*.

For the 1990s, the milestone indie movie was *Pulp Fiction* (1994). In *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), Quentin Tarantino had given the caper film a zestful viciousness and vulgarity. His follow-up was a stew of old genres—gangster film, prizefight film, outlaw movie. Bathing nearly every character in world-weary cool, Tarantino shuffled chronology and interwove story lines. He wrote scenes of arch wit and visceral violence (a hypodermic to the heart, the interior of a car spattered with blood and brains), sprinkling in references to movies and television shows. His chatty hitman duo quickly entered popular culture (**Color Plate 28.11**), as did such taglines as "Royale with cheese" and "Did I break your concentration?" At a cost of $12 million, *Pulp Fiction* grossed $200 million worldwide.

Tarantino revived the panache of the disreputable films he had admired as a video-store clerk. He made a twisty caper film recalling 50s noir (*Jackie Brown*, 1997), a mash-up of Hong Kong, Japanese, and Eurotrash action (*Kill Bill*, 2003, 2004), an alternative-history combat movie (*Inglourious Basterds*, 2009), a Western set among slaves and their masters (*Django Unchained*, 2012), and another Western modeled on Sergio Leone's work (*The Hateful Eight*, 2015). *Grindhouse* (2007), composed of two short features and some fake trailers, was an homage to seedy movie theaters, while *Once Upon a Time. . . in Hollywood* (2018) paid homage to late 1960s movie culture. Tarantino elevated downmarket genres with his fanboy enthusiasm, his adroit use of music, and a surprisingly rigorous visual style.

Wes Anderson was a less flamboyant figure, but he attracted legions of admirers. His off-center comedies, cartoonish but streaked with pathos, created stylized worlds akin to magical realism (see Latin American Literature and Cinema p. 594). He relied on deadpan performances, voice-over narration, and fixed compositions that put his actors facing the camera or at right angles to it, as if sitting for portraits (**Color Plate 28.12**).

This linear, deadpan style was seen in the compositions of Takeshi Kitano (see **Class of the 1990s**) and other 1990s directors, but Anderson used it to suggest the rigid self-containment of the well-off (*Rushmore*, 1998; *The Royal Tenenbaums*, 2001; *The Darjeeling Limited*, 2007) and to celebrate childhood romance (*Moonrise Kingdom*, 2012; **Video 28.4**). Anderson took on more tragic material in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014), which renders the coming of World War II as both absurd and poignant. His mania for handmade effects led him to stop-motion animation in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009) and *Isle of Dogs* (2018).

All these directors became celebrities, virtual brands in themselves. Lynch gained fame as a photographer, marketed his own brand of coffee, opened a Paris nightclub, and revived *Twin Peaks* as an eighteen-hour streaming series. Tarantino released films he liked under his own label, Rolling Thunder, and bought a Los Angeles theater to screen his favorite classics. The ingratiating geekiness of Wes Anderson's films impelled fans to design their own merchandising based on characters and furnishings of "Wesworld." These directors' unique artistic accomplishments helped make independent production an essential part of American film culture.

To Sleep with Anger

28.23 The opening hallucinatory imagery of *To Sleep with Anger* suggests the demonic world that will invade the Black family's comfortable lives.

Simple Men

28.24 *Simple Men*: Hartley often uses deflected glances and deep medium shots, as characters talk without listening to each other.

For filmmakers telling stories of social subcultures, tweaking a genre allowed them to attract mainstream audiences. Gay and lesbian films often adapted traditions of melodrama and comedy to alternative lifestyles (*Desert Hearts*, 1986; *Longtime Companion*, 1990; *Go Fish*, 1994).

Something similar happened with African American, Asian American, and Hispanic films. Charles Burnett, whose *Killer of Sheep* (1977) was a major forerunner of independent cinema, showed a modern Black family invaded by a mysterious house guest in the fable *To Sleep with Anger* (1990; **28.23**). Comedies, such as *House Party* (1990) and *Barbershop* (2002), and crime thrillers, such as *Set It Off* (1996) and *Training Day* (2001), showed that Black performers in familiar genres could attract wide audiences. Wayne Wang's microbudgeted *Chan is Missing* (1982) used conventions of the detective story to explore a Chinese-American community. Jon M. Chu's *Crazy, Rich Asians* (2018) borrowed from the rom-com to spoof Asia's *nouveau riche* while Lulu Wang's *The Farewell* (2019) drew upon family melodrama to examine the role of custom and tradition in modern China.

Other filmmakers gave familiar material a new seriousness and emotional specificity. Examples were Kimberly Peirce's thematically daring *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), the marital drama *We Don't Live Here Anymore* (2004), Kenneth Lonergan's *You Can Count on Me* (2000), Kelly Reichardt's *Wendy and Lucy* (2008), and Ramin Bahrani's *Goodbye Solo* (2009). Often these films had a marked regional flavor, such as Victor Nuñez's lyrical Florida tales (*Ruby in Paradise*, 1993; *Ulee's Gold*, 1997), the Delta-set *Ballast* (2005), the bayou phantasmagoria *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012), and the dusty plains of South Dakota in *The Rider* (2017).

A filmmaker might develop a genre through visual and performance techniques. Todd Haynes, like R.W. Fassbinder an admirer of Douglas Sirk (see The Melodrama p. 301), offered the 1950s-tinted melodramas *Far from Heaven* (2002) and *Carol* (2015). Hal Hartley's melodramas of Long Island anomie, such as *Trust* (1991) and *Simple Men* (1992), displayed a brittle artifice. He let his characters deliver hyperarticulate dialogue in flat tones and in ingeniously staged long takes (**28.24**).

Mystery films and thrillers long offered the possibility of deceiving the audience through unreliable narrators and shifting viewpoints. The indie thriller could make fresh storytelling tactics a selling point. The surprise ending of *The Usual Suspects* (1995) earned it a cult following. The plot of Christopher Nolan's "puzzle film" *Memento* (2000) is presented in reverse order, with the last scene first and the initial scene last. But the situation, centered on a man believing he is taking revenge for his wife's death, is familiar from film noir, and exemplifies how even a markedly artificial indie film needed a grounding in familiar tradition (**28.25**).

Independent film, depending on appealing performers, found congenial territory in comedy. From the 1980s through the 2010s, the conventions of romantic comedy would be tested and twisted by many indie filmmakers. Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* (1986) shows three men pursuing a woman. But contrary to Hollywood norms, the men are Black, and the woman makes no secret of her sexual appetites. Lee revels in African American slang and courtship rituals, as well as his own frenetic performance as the unstoppable jive artist Mars Blackmon (**28.26**). Lee was immediately taken into the studios, for which he made many provocative films before returning to the independent realm.

The indie romantic comedy brought in eccentric characters, wilder eroticism, and more downbeat elements, including unhappy or open endings. *Spanking the Monkey* (1994), *Swingers* (1994), and *Flirting with Disaster* (1995) paved the way for Hollywood's raunchy farces of the

Memento

28.25 The protagonist of *Memento*, who writes message to himself on his body, meets a woman with designs of her own.

She's Gotta Have It

28.26 Spike Lee as Mars Blackmon, incessantly wooing Nola Darling (*She's Gotta Have It*).

Tiny Furniture

28.27 *Tiny Furniture*: the suspicious stranger crashing at Aura's apartment is reading Woody Allen stories. Will he be as narcissistic as an Allen male on the make?

2000s. Many films gained their impact from satire on upper-class lifestyles, such as *The Squid and the Whale* (2005), *Frances Ha* (2012), and *Drinking Buddies* (2013). The trend recalled Woody Allen's urban comedy-dramas, an influence openly acknowledged in *Tiny Furniture* (**28.27**).

La La Land

28.28 Many musicals have included stylized dance numbers. *La La Land* uses this convention to suggest an alternative version of how the couple's lives might have turned out.

Low budgets militated against the big production values of fantasy and science-fiction blockbusters, but some filmmakers found possibilities. *Primer* (2004) was a somewhat nerdy, enigmatic time-travel story made for $7,000. Shane Carruth had never made a movie before, but his film, with the air of a science-club experiment gone wrong, attracted a cult, and byzantine websites plotted *Primer*'s convoluted time scheme. Carruth went on to *Upstream Color* (2013), a tale of a parasite that changes people's identities. In a comparable vein was Jeff Nichols' *Take Shelter* (2011), about a young Ohio man who comes to believe that an apocalyptic weather event is about to destroy him and his family.

Even musicals got a revisionist makeover occasionally. The dance drama *Black Swan* (2010) turned competitive ballet toward horror, and Damien Chazelle's *Whiplash* (2014) made a young man's dedication to drumming an ordeal under a sadistic teacher. In *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996), Woody Allen crafted a musical in which actors sing classic songs in their own voices and dance as best they can. Chazelle's *La La Land* (2016) paid homage to Jacques Demy and MGM musicals while offering a parallel-universe final number (**28.28**).

Magnolia

28.29 *Magnolia*: Donnie Smith, washed-up quiz kid, broods on a crime while singing "Wise Up."

The Spirit of the 1970s Genre revision had been a central strategy of the New Hollywood (see The New Hollywood: Late 1960s to Late 1970s p. 458), an era that many indie auteurs took as a model for blending familiar forms with personal treatment. David O. Russell recalled "all those great 1970s Hollywood movies that had stars and were commercial; yet they were original and subversive."[15]

Perhaps the indies' most pervasive debt to 1970s filmmaking was the renaissance of a form that Altman's *Nashville* (1975) had pioneered: the network narrative. The film showing multiple protagonists linked in complicated ways became virtually an indie genre. In *Happiness* (1998), Todd Solondz offered a cross section of middle-class misery, from phone sex to pedophilia. Multimedia artist Miranda July's first feature, the network narrative *Me and You and Everyone We Know* (2004), handled similar subjects, but with a wide-eyed insouciance that was nearly comic. Similar experiments in linked fates were *Thirteen Conversations about One Thing* (2001), *Elephant* (2003), *Bobby* (2006), and *Certain Women* (2016).

Paul Thomas Anderson, an admirer of Altman, Scorsese, and others, tried to keep the edginess of that era alive. *Boogie Nights* (1997) offered an Altmanesque portrait of the 1970s porn-movie industry, treating scandalous scenes (explicit couplings, a final revelation of the hero's penis) with delicate framing and sweeping camera movements. *Magnolia* (1999) was even more ambitious, charting a day in the San Fernando Valley that is interrupted by a meteorological miracle. Few American melodramas have put angry suffering so centrally on display, portraying men cracking under physical and emotional strain, endlessly wounding themselves and their loved ones (**28.29**).

Anderson tried other genres. *Punch-Drunk Love* (2002) was a melancholy romance wringing poignancy out of Adam Sandler's awkward performance style. *There Will Be Blood* (2007) was a brooding study of a flinty 1900s oilman, and its analysis of ruthless business ventures seemed a comment on the emerging economic crisis of the 2000s. *The Master* (2012) was an ambivalent portrait of a self-help guru and the disturbed man who becomes attached to his cult, while *Inherent Vice* (2014), a rumpled story of a hippie detective, recalled Altman's *The Long Goodbye* (1973). *Phantom Thread* (2017) was a chilly psychodrama revisiting the power dynamics of *Rebecca*, *Gaslight*, and other 1940s suspense films.

John Sayles maintained the 1970s spirit in a more socially committed direction. His low-key but nuanced scrutiny of the political dimensions of everyday life brought a 1970s concern with community into the next three decades, often in network narratives (*The Return of the Secaucus Seven*; *Matewan*, 1987; *City of Hope*, 1991; *Lone Star*, 1996; *Sunshine State*, 2002; *Honeydripper*, 2008).

Terrence Malick's couple-on-the-run movie *Badlands* (1973) and a Whitmanesque farmland epic *Days of Heaven* (1978) had established him as a major talent. He left the scene but returned with a spiritual war film, *The Thin Red Line* (1998). Made by a big independent company and released by Fox, it seemed to signal the resurgence of personalized genre films, with its floating voice-overs and serene landscapes scarred by battle. The same sense of awe infused *The New World* (2005), a historical drama about Pocahontas. After *The Tree of Life* (2011), Malick released a series of introspective, lyrical films about psychological crises among the professional class. In his purity of intention and his reverence for the classic cinema, from the silent era through Neorealism, he became a constant reminder of the aspirations of the 1970s Movie Brats.

An American Art Cinema? Stylistically, most indie films adapted the techniques of intensified continuity, and many used the free camera (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 566), often for budgetary

reasons. At the level of narrative form, both genre revisions and more eccentric projects pushed the boundaries of conventional storytelling. *Pulp Fiction*'s nonchronological block construction was the most influential example. The disconcerting flashbacks, replays, and shift in point of view that emerged in studio films (and cable television) were shaped partly by indie films such as *Lost Highway*, *The Limey* (1999), and *21 Grams*.

Here again, Jim Jarmusch had already shown how a small budget did not hamper experimentation. *Stranger Than Paradise* reminded filmmakers of the resources of the relaxed, static shot so aggressively used by Warhol (see Andy Warhol and Pop Cinema p. 446) and so quietly used by Hou Hsiao-hsien (see Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-Hsien p. 619). Todd Haynes's *Safe* (1995) traces the plight of a mysteriously ailing housewife in shots reminiscent of Michelangelo Antonioni (**Color Plate 28.13**).

After *Stranger Than Paradise*, Jarmusch played with time unpredictably. *Down by Law* (1986) keeps the camera locked in a cell with three mismatched prisoners. *Mystery Train* (1989) synchronizes three Memphis story lines. As if making an anti-network narrative, *Night on Earth* (1991) tracks unconnected characters at the same moment around the world. Jarmusch's use of dead time, following the models of Neorealism and Antonioni, had something in common with the German Sensibilist directors as well (see Herzog, Wenders, and Sensibilist Cinema p. 560). Jarmusch helped create the "hanging-out" movie, which would become an important option for indies both at home and abroad.

In addition, the episodic *Stranger Than Paradise*, opposed to Hollywood's strongly plotted scripts, pointed toward a more fractured storytelling, as in the daisy-chain monologues of Richard Linklater's *Slacker* (1991). Todd Haynes's first feature, *Poison* (1991), offers three distinct AIDS-related stories, each in a different cinematic or televisual style. Haynes's *I'm Not There* (2007) was a multileveled collage of Bob Dylan's career, with the hero played by six radically different-looking performers. Hal Hartley's *Flirt* (1995) adopted the block structure to present three distinct stories, each using the same dialogue. *Moonlight* (Barry Jenkins, 2016) traced the growth of boy into man by isolating three central periods that shaped his sense of identity and sexual orientation.

So common had block storytelling become that few critics noted that Jarmusch's 2016 feature *Paterson*, about a bus driver who writes verse, revived the chapter layout of *Stranger*, now in a seven-day format. Thirty years after helping to launch the indie era, Jarmusch was still laying an arresting form over a modest study of an unusual set of characters.

Indies and the Industry

The US independent film was a small-scale trend that became a powerful tradition, one influencing filmmakers all over the world. The tradition owed a lot to passionate filmmakers, but it could not have flourished were it not for institutions—the "indie industry." At first, those institutions operated alongside the Majors, but soon the Majors got into the act as well.

The 1980s: Creating the Indie Brand The upstart filmmakers benefited from new funding sources, such as Public Television's "American Playhouse" series. Specialized US cable companies had an appetite for niche fare, and European broadcasting companies, notably West Germany's ZDF, were eager to acquire low-cost American films. In the early years of the home video market, preselling rights in different countries could cover a large part of a film's budget.

Of the independent distribution companies that sprang up, two became dominant. New Line Cinema, established in 1967, was a premiere distributor of European films and low-budget horror. It moved into production and expanded to include more highbrow independent films (*The Rapture*, 1991; *My Own Private Idaho*). The company started its Fine Line division to deal in edgier fare such as *The Unbelievable Truth* (1990) and *Gummo* (1997), while finding mainstream success with *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1990), the *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise, and Jim Carrey comedies.

The other big indie distributor, Miramax, was founded in 1979 by brothers Bob and Harvey Weinstein. Like New Line, it initially favored foreign imports. Buoyed by the Oscar-crowned US release of *Cinema Paradiso* (1988), the Weinsteins discovered their first indie hit in *sex, lies, and videotape*. Miramax went on to triumph with *Reservoir Dogs*, *Clerks* (1994), and *Pulp Fiction*. By the early 1990s, both New Line and Miramax were Mini-Majors, financing and producing films.

Like international art cinema, American independents relied on film festivals for exposure and publicity. In 1985, Robert Redford's Sundance Institute took over the US Film Festival, installed it in Park City, Utah, and renamed it the Sundance Film Festival. Its early programming leaned toward humanistic rural pictures ("granola movies"), but the screening of *sex, lies, and videotape* changed the festival's image drastically.

Sundance attracted thousands of submissions, was covered extensively in the press, and established its own cable television channel. Park City swarmed with Hollywood agents and distributors looking for the next hit.

Soon many US communities launched festivals showcasing independent film. The Sundance brand sold America on indie film.

By the late 1980s, independent cinema ran in tandem with mainstream Hollywood. There were between 200 and 250 independent features per year, many more films than the studios were putting out. From theaters, they would move to home video and overseas television. A professional association, the Independent Feature Project, published a magazine, *Filmmaker*, and gave annual awards.

With this level of support, some films rivaled Hollywood productions. How many people who saw *Platoon* (1986), *Dirty Dancing* (1987), *Mystic Pizza* (1988), *The Player* (1992), and *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) realized that these were, in financing and distribution, independent movies? But other films took on an outlaw aura. *Pulp Fiction* was marketed as the last word in hipness, and other releases sold on the basis of a defiantly grungy look.

For example, Robert Rodriguez's gunfest *El Mariachi* (1993), edited on VHS tape, became a showcase for resourceful camerawork and dynamic cutting. Kevin Smith's day-in-the-slacker-life comedy *Clerks* was as grainy as a surveillance video. *The Blair Witch Project* made a virtue of its amateurish style by pretending to be an unfinished student film. Brilliantly marketed on the Internet, it proved a spectacular hit.

If films this low-tech could be released theatrically, one might conclude that the independent film had come of age. Kevin Smith remarked of Jarmusch's breakthrough film, "You watch *Stranger [Than Paradise]*, you think 'I could really make a movie.'"[16] Thousands of young people watching *Clerks*, *El Mariachi*, and *The Blair Witch Project* thought exactly the same thing. As with "indie music," "indie film" suggested something down and dangerous that could attract young people with money to spend.

The 1990s: The Majors Get into the Game By any measure, the indie market involved a financial gamble. The extravagant revenues earned by *sex, lies, and videotape* and *Pulp Fiction* were exceptional. In 1995, independent films represented only about 5 percent of US box-office income. Yet the studios came shopping.

In 1993, the Disney corporation purchased Miramax. Soon New Line became a subsidiary of Time Warner. To generate and market offbeat product, the Majors established new divisions: Fox Searchlight, Sony Pictures Classics, Paramount Vantage, and Warner Independent. Because these companies wanted an indie identity within the studios, they were sometimes sarcastically called the "Dependents."

Why this embrace of independent cinema? For one thing, although indie hits were rare, even a moderate one could be profitable. In 1998, *Pi* yielded $4 million in rentals on a $300,000 budget. *The Blair Witch Project* was made for $35,000, sold to the mini-distributor Artisan for $1 million, and earned more than $241 million worldwide. It may have been the most profitable film ever made.

Moreover, the studios were always on the lookout for new blood and culture's cutting edge. By acquiring independent companies and setting up specialty divisions, the Majors could scout for young writers, directors, and actors. Several directors were recruited for big-budget projects. From two indie comedy-dramas, David O. Russell moved to Warners for the unconventional war movie *Three Kings* (1999). Kevin Smith and Robert Rodriguez were snapped up by the Majors, and the latter had a mainstream hit with *Spy Kids* (2000).

Several indie directors were hired to work on action blockbusters. Bryan Singer moved from *The Usual Suspects* to *X-Men* (2000), while Christopher Nolan was hired to reinvigorate a comic-book franchise with *Batman Begins*. The trend was strengthened in the 2010s. Marc Webb went from *(500) Days of Summer* to rebooting a superhero franchise with *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012). After a striking independent film, *Middle of Nowhere* (2011), Ava DuVernay followed the mid-budget prestige project *Selma* (2014) with the science-fiction blockbuster *A Wrinkle in Time* (2018). James Wan jumped from low-budget horror films (*Insidious,* 2010) to high-octane franchise titles such as *Furious 7* (2015) and *Aquaman* (2018)

Two generations of actors also made the move to the mainstream. Independent films made stars of Julianne Moore, Forest Whitaker, Frances McDormand, Andie McDowell, Scarlett Johansson, Matt Dillon, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Samuel Jackson, Ben Affleck, Matthew McConaughey, Jennifer Lawrence, and many other performers. Screenwriters and cinematographers likewise started in the indie realm before moving to big studio projects.

By absorbing the indies, the studios were also diversifying their product. While the studios' core business consisted of blockbusters and program fillers, they were assigning their prestige pictures and more unusual titles to their boutique divisions and hoping some would attract big box office. Independent films' more daring storytelling strategies—complex flashbacks, network narratives, plays with point of view and parallel universes—found their way into mainstream crime films, romantic comedies, and psychological dramas. Before the rise of independent film, few studios would have taken a risk on *The Truman Show* (1998), *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Stranger than Fiction* (2006), and *Synecdoche, New York* (2008).

Mutual Appreciation

28.30 In a lengthy shot, two friends who are becoming romantically involved tentatively clasp hands (*Mutual Appreciation*).

David Fincher made *Se7en* and *The Game* (1997) for New Line, but his most daring film, *Fight Club*, was released through 20th Century Fox. If the Majors changed the indies, to some extent the indies changed the Majors.

More and more "Dependent" films were winning Academy Awards, which gave studios bragging rights and sometimes boosted the bottom line. But often these films were mocked as indie sellouts. *Garden State* (2004), *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006), and *Juno* (2007) risked being seen as studio pictures with a dash of quirk. As if in response to the mainstreaming of the independent cinema, a radically do-it-yourself trend emerged in the 2000s, one that came to be called Mumblecore.

Centering on college-educated twentysomethings trying to sort out their lives, Mumblecore films—mostly romantic comedies—consisted of long, often fumbling conversations about love, sex, work, and everyday incidents. Most were shot on video fairly quickly and, though scripted, counted on the actors to improvise to some degree. Andrew Bujalski's *Funny Ha Ha* (2002) and *Mutual Appreciation* (2005) typify the movement's use of lengthy dialogues. Bujalski shoots using classic Hollywood continuity and puts the emphasis on the performers (**28.30**).

The Mumblecore group had largely been ignored by Sundance, but they met at other festivals, sometimes collaborating. When distributors refused their films, they pioneered direct Internet marketing. They created websites and posted video blogs, podcasts, trailers, and YouTube shorts. Some of the features sold thousands of copies on DVD and made millions on streaming services. On the demand curve for movies, Hollywood was going for the peak, while Mumblecore was serving what was coming to be known as the long tail, the Web 2.0 niches created for self-published books and indie bands.

The Later 2000s and Beyond: Indie TV? A number of studio boutiques shut down in the 2000s, and others were not supporting as many productions. At this point, however, new funding sources came to the rescue. The spectacular growth of private wealth during the 1990s and 2000s led several entrepreneurs to finance films that they found worthwhile.

Jeff Skoll, an early executive at eBay, founded Participant Productions to support liberal films such as *Syriana* (2005) and *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). Vulcan Productions, underwritten by Microsoft billionaire and philanthropist Paul G. Allen, funded films from a liberal-progressive perspective. Megan Ellison, daughter of the head of the software firm Oracle, produced a wide array of films from political dramas (*Zero Dark Thirty*, 2012; *Detroit*, 2017) to comedies (*Sausage Party*, 2016; *Downsizing*, 2017).

Mark Cuban, another Internet billionaire, created a vertically integrated motion picture company: 2929 Pictures. It produced mid- or low-budget films, distributed them and many others through its subsidiary Magnolia Pictures, and held a theater chain, the arthouse circuit Landmark Theaters. Cuban also owned the HDNet cable channel.

Other distributors continued to emerge. The Independent Film Channel (IFC), a cable outlet widely available in the United States, had been a major funder of independent features. In 1999, it took up production and distribution, an effort rewarded by the crossover triumph of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. For the next two decades, IFC released a vast number of both foreign imports and American productions, many of them premiered at its Manhattan multiplex. The Weinstein Brothers, who relinquished the Miramax label to Disney, also remained significant players on the indie scene, thanks to their instinct for Oscar bait and to the loyalty of Quentin Tarantino. The A24 company began an ambitious distribution schedule focused on low-budget, edgy fare (*Ex Machina*, 2015; *Green Room*, 2016; *Uncut Gems*, 2019).

Despite these new energies, filmmakers were in a precarious situation. The rise of the DVD format in the 2000s had helped sustain them as VHS had earlier, but the disc market flattened. Cable networks, pressured by massive cord-cutting, were not supporting as many features, instead investing in original series and reality shows.

Indie filmmakers had long found work in television, and in the 2010s the edginess of "indie cinema" perfectly fitted what was coming to be called "Peak TV." With space for 500 scripted series, television's opportunities

were immense. Lena Dunham's feature *Tiny Furniture* reaped few theatrical gains, but it launched her as producer, writer, and star of the HBO cable series *Girls*.

Mumblecore filmmakers slipped smoothly into television, with the Duplass Brothers offering *Togetherness* to HBO and Joe Swanberg providing Netflix with *Easy*. Spike Lee "rebooted" his debut feature *She's Gotta Have It* as a streaming series, showing that the 1980s indie sensibility suited the niche audiences of Peak TV.

Streaming companies were also funding features, some of which gained theatrical release (see Chapter 30). Just as cable companies and video distributors had supported the indie pictures of the 1980s and 1990s, now Netflix, Amazon, and other subscription services were looking to stock their online libraries.

The horror genre, always an indie mainstay, gave beginning filmmakers access to multiplexes. Tactics of art-cinema narration blended with occult elements in *The Witch* (Robert Eggers, 2015) and *Hereditary* (Ari Aster, 2018). Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017) turned a mad-scientist plot into an exposure of white supremacy among the liberal elite. Peele's revamping of horror conventions created a suspenseful film that earned a stunning $255 million on a $4.5 million budget. His next horror project, *Us* (2019, **28.31**), garnered a comparable amount. Peele's films were supported by Blumhouse Productions, which had created the *Paranormal Activity*, *Insidious*, and *Purge* franchises. Blumhouse became the premier brand for provocative low-budget genre vehicles (*Split*, 2017; *The Invisible Man*, 2020; *The Hunt*, 2020).

Indie films attracted attention at overseas film festivals, and during awards season they drew more accolades than many releases from the Majors. In 2016, Lionsgate's *La La Land* earned Damien Chazelle the Oscar for Best Director, while A24's *Moonlight*, filmed on a minuscule budget, won Best Picture. Even in the harsh terrain of the 2010s, independent theatrical cinema did not die.

The US film industry came to depend heavily on the new media that emerged in the 1980s. In 2007, worldwide video in all its forms—DVD, broadcast television, and cable television—yielded the Majors more than $38 billion, nine times their share of ticket sales. The Majors supplied film content but also expanded their investment in delivery systems, buying TV networks and cable channels.

Movies on the big screen were not the biggest source of revenues, but they remained crucial ingredients in the media mix. Theatrical release was the advertisement for cable and streaming transmission. Films spawned television programs, video games, comic books, and straight-to-video sequels. The press tracked top-grossing films as if they were sports teams, and the Academy Awards ceremony remained an international ritual. Film festivals relied on Hollywood stars to assure press coverage. Fan magazines, infotainment television, websites, and bloggers catered to an insatiable appetite for gossip and insider opinion. Independent cinema, constantly in dialogue with whatever the mainstream was doing, remained prominent far out of proportion to its financial clout.

By 2020, this system seemed fairly stable and was adjusting to the ongoing challenges of globalization and digital technology (see Chapters 29 and 30). Hollywood claimed a large chunk of a record $42.5 billion in global box office.

But the sudden outbreak of the coronavirus threatened to change Hollywood more drastically than any event since World War II. Two reporters asserted: "It's the greatest economic calamity to ever hit Hollywood, Broadway, and other entertainment business hubs, dwarfing the wreckage left by such recent catastrophes as 9/11 and the Great Recession."[17]

Film production halted, with technicians and specialists most severely afflicted. More than 90 percent of the major union's craft workers became unemployed. It was

Us

28.31 On a vacation, an African American family is pursued by characters who eerily resemble them (*Us*).

unclear when production could resume, but when it did the process would need to include health protocols. Sanitation, testing, and other procedures were expected to add 20 percent to a film's budget.

Distribution was affected too. Internationally, the pandemic closed the crucial overseas market to US exports. The loss of China's 60,000 screens was a particularly severe blow. In America, films that opened during the pandemic, as well as some family fare not yet released, were shifted to digital platforms. Theater owners were outraged at this violation of the 90-day window that protected them. This tactic sometimes yielded good revenues for the studios, but it was unclear whether premiering most films on streaming would yield earnings comparable to theatrical box office.

Most apparent to moviegoers was the impact on US exhibition. Nearly all of America's 40,000 screens, at 6,000 venues, shut down and stayed closed for months. Most of the nation's 125,000 ushers and concessionaires were thrown out of work. With production paused, no one could be sure when the flow of films would resume. 2020 was shaping up to be a "lost year" for exhibitors.

Overall, the crisis revealed weak spots in the Hollywood juggernaut. Already there had been cracks: widespread piracy, the collapse of the DVD market, and the competition of social media, video games, and YouTube. But now it was clear that a business dedicated to synergy and blockbusters could suffer on a scale no one had imagined.

A media conglomerate might own a cable company, but money-strapped citizens might decide to cut the cord. A theme park no longer looked like an asset when customers were in lockdown. Even the Disney behemoth was at risk (see Disney World Gets Bigger p. 650). More than a third of Disney's total revenue came from resorts, theme parks, and cruises. The pandemic forced the firm to furlough 100,000 employees, nearly half of its total workforce. That saved half a billion dollars a month, but how could these face-to-face businesses be safely restarted in a post-pandemic world?

Disney and its peers faced financing problems as well. Before the crisis, AT&T's acquisition of Time Warner gave it a debt burden of more than $170 billion. Comcast had to service $112 billion of debt. Disney needed to service about half that. In addition, American Multi Cinemas (AMC), the world's largest chain, was seeking $500 million in new loans. The pandemic underscored the risks inherent in the flurry of mergers and acquisitions.

Now the multiplex was revealed as both a gift and a curse. Theatrical release had long been the main driver for a film's ancillary market. Just as important was the sheer churn of new releases. Every week multiplexes absorbed second-tier items, genre pictures, faith-based attractions, indie pictures, kid movies, revivals of fan favorites, and special events such as operas and stand-up comedy. Even if the programs were not heavily attended, this rhythm kept the multiplexes open and ready for the next blockbuster.

Yet clearly, America had too many screens for the demand; the typical multiplex averaged only half capacity each week. By freezing the release schedule, the crisis exposed the shakiness of the theater business. Sustained by low-paid teenage labor, increasing ticket prices, and expensive concessions, it was already in trouble.

The widening spread of the infection taught viewers to rely on streaming. A May 2020 survey suggested that nearly 70 percent of respondents declared that for the foreseeable future they would rather pay to watch new releases online, while only 13 percent said they would venture out. More than half said that attending any crowded public event "will scare me for a long time."[18] Industry observers suggested that filmmakers might have an uphill battle to win audiences back to multiplexes.

The coronavirus outbreak would have harsh and protracted effects. Exactly how it would affect the US film industry could not be predicted. What was evident was that American cinema, central to the world's popular culture and tightly bound to a larger entertainment economy, would never be the same again.

REFERENCES

1. Stephen Prince, *A New Pot of Gold: Hollywood under the Electronic Rainbow, 1980–1989.* Vol. 10: *History of the American Cinema* (New York: Scribners, 2000), p. 84.
2. Bill Mechanic, quoted in Don Groves, "Global Vidiots' Delight," *Variety* (April 15–21, 1996): 43.
3. Todd Spangler, "Disney to End Netflix Deal, sets Launch of ESPN and Disney-Branded Streaming Services," *Variety* (August 8, 2017) at http://variety.com/2017/digital/news/disney-netflix-end-acquires-bamtech-espn-ott-services-1202519917/.
4. Guy Lodge, quoted in Jenell Riley, "The Film Is the Real Star," *Variety* (March 28, 2017), 65.
5. Quoted in Marc Graser, "'Indiana Jones' Goes to Market," *Variety* (June 18, 2007), at www.variety.com/article/VR1117967127.html?categoryid=2429&cs=1.
6. Quoted in Anita Ebersole, *Blockbusters: Hit-Making, Risk-Taking, and the Big Business of Entertainment* (New York: Holt, 2013), 23–24.
7. "'Mad Max Fury Road': The Oral History of a Modern Action Classic," *The New York Times*, May 12, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/movies/mad-max-fury-road-oral-history.html.

8. Peter Krämer, "Would You Take Your Child to See This Film? The Cultural and Social Work of the Family-Adventure Movie," in *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, eds. Steve Neale and Murray Smith (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 305–308.
9. Walter Murch, *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing* (Los Angeles: Silman-James, 1995), p. 88.
10. Lance Brown, quoted in Tom Kenny, *Sound for Picture: The Art of Sound Design in Film and Television* (Vallejo, CA: Mix Books, 2000), p. 90.
11. Spike Lee, with Lisa Jones, *Do The Right Thing* (New York: Fireside, 1989), p. 33.
12. "A Message from Christopher Nolan," *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, Special Edition, Warner Bros. Blu-ray set.
13. Quoted in Dennis Lim, "Having Your Way with Hollywood, or the Further Adventures of Steven Soderbergh," in *Steven Soderbergh Interviews*, ed. Anthony Kaufman (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), p. 154.
14. James Schamus, personal interview, 26 February 1998.
15. Quoted in Emanuel Levy, *Cinema of Outsiders: The Rise of American Independent Film* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 206.
16. Quoted in John Pierson, *Spike, Mike, Slackers & Dykes: A Guided Tour Across a Decade of American Independent Cinema* (New York: Hyperion, 1995), p. 31.
17. Brent Lang and Gene Maddaus, "Breaking Point," *Variety*, April 29, 2020, p. 28.
18. Adam B. Vary, "Study Shows 70% of Consumers Would Rather Watch New Movies At Home," *Variety*, May 20, 2020. https://variety.com/2020/film/news/new-movies-better-at-home-than-in-theaters-performance-research-1234611208/.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On independent cinema: "Independent film: How different?"

On the rise of franchises: "Fantasy franchises or franchise fantasies?"

On genre films: "A behemoth from the Dead Zone"

On the Jason Bourne films: "[insert your favorite Bourne pun here]" and "Unsteadicam chronicles"

On superhero movies: "Superheroes for sale"

On 1980s Hollywood: "It's the 80s, stupid"

On intensified continuity: "Intensified continuity revisited," "Walk the talk," "The Cross," and "Come in and sit down"

On Christopher Nolan: "Directors: Nolan"

On *Arrival*: "ARRIVAL: When is now?"

On Tarantino: "The 1940s are over, and Tarantino's still playing with blocks"

On Wes Anderson: "Directors: Anderson, Wes"

On *Little Women*: "Un-Marry me a little: MARRIAGE STORY and LITTLE WOMEN"

On *Birdman*: "BIRDMAN: Following Riggan's orders"

CHAPTER 29

Dancer in the Dark

TOWARD A GLOBAL FILM CULTURE

The Great Wall

In 1970, a visitor to Paris or Tokyo would have spotted few signs of American culture—perhaps only Coca-Cola and a few Ford automobiles. Likewise, Japanese cars, Belgian beer, and Italian handbags were seldom seen in the United States. But over the last decades of the twentieth century, national cultures were transformed by globalization, the expanding networks of influence that tightened the ties among all countries and their citizens.

The most visible sign of the trend was the prominence of multinational corporations, from Exxon and IBM to Toyota and Benetton. Multinational corporations created regional subsidiaries, bought smaller firms, and entered into joint ventures with other multinationals. Before the 1980s, mergers and acquisitions across national borders were fairly rare, but waves of deregulation encouraged transnational enterprises in banking, the automotive industry, information technology, and telecommunications. In many cases, the creation of intellectual property—brands, logos, and "content"—became more important than the manufacture of products, which might take place anywhere. Nike's shoes bore a Greek name, were designed in Oregon, and were assembled from components made across Asia. But around the world, everyone knew the company simply as a casual swoosh and the hard-driving slogan "Just Do It."

Globalization became evident in other ways. When worldwide financial markets were deregulated in the late 1980s, they began to play a crucial role in national economies. Computer systems could track immediate shifts in prices, currency values, and supplies of goods. People became more mobile through migration and tourism. All these changes created new worldwide regulatory agencies, such as the World Bank, as well as transnational social organizations, such as Greenpeace and Doctors without Borders. The Internet intensified globalization, as political movements and social institutions could take advantage of information that could be communicated very rapidly.

The West, plus some Asian Pacific nations, led globalization, announcing the dawn of a new age of free-market capitalism and universal democracy. The effects, however, were varied. Corporations could send production to countries with low wages, and then, when those countries raised their standard of living, pull out and head for cheaper labor markets—the "race to the bottom." A fluid global market often disrupted communities, while the demands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) made poorer nations, typically in Africa and Latin America, more dependent on richer ones.

The disparity between rich and poor sharpened: in 1996, the combined income of the world's 400 richest people exceeded the total income of the poorest 45 percent of the earth's population. The attack by Islamic fundamentalist terrorists on the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York in September 2001 was sometimes interpreted as a symbolic assault on America's role in globalization. The events of 9/11 spurred policy debates about whether international capitalism, democracy, and other features of modernization would automatically benefit traditional cultures. The risks of globalization emerged even more starkly with the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Air travel and international commerce spread the infection around the world, with more than four million cases and more than a quarter of a million deaths in the spring.

Globalization had occurred before, most recently between 1850 and 1920, when nations and peoples had been bound into European countries' empires. The international spread of cinema was one sign of this process (see Chapters 1 and 2). Penetrating virtually every society, movies became the first globalized mass medium. After World War II, and especially after the 1960s, globalization accelerated, based less on colonial conquest than on social and economic ties. Popular culture spread as well, via new technologies. Television (which became global in the 1970s and 1980s), communications satellites (1970s), audio cassettes (1970s), compact disc or CDs (1980s), videotape (1980s), and digital media (1990s) sent entertainment throughout the world. From the 1980s onward, cinema became more widely available than it had ever been before.

Globalization's effects on film can be examined from several angles. Most evident was the role of Hollywood, which created a global cinema. As a counterthrust, regional impulses responded to Hollywood's international power. At the same time, filmmakers in exile created a "diasporic" cinema that linked new homes to old. All these tendencies were visible at film festivals, which emerged as a distribution network parallel to that of the US Majors. Piracy, facilitated by video formats and the Internet, also carried films around the world. In addition, there emerged energetic, worldwide fan communities.

HOLLYWORLD?

From early on, US studios created a popular culture that people in many societies enjoyed. During the 1990s and 2000s, the sheer pervasiveness of American cinema became even more evident. Films from the seven major distributors—Warner Bros., Universal, Paramount, Columbia, 20th Century Fox, MGM/UA, and Disney (Buena Vista)—reached nearly every country on earth. In the 1980s, more than half of the Majors' theatrical income flowed in from overseas. By 2019, more than 70 percent did.

Hollywood Needs the World In part, contemporary Hollywood globalized by joining foreign corporations. As we have seen (see The Search for Synergy p. 646), the Australian firm News Corporation acquired 20th Century Fox, and Sony of Japan bought Columbia. Universal was absorbed by the Japanese electronics firm Matsushita, then by Canada's Seagram's, and later by the French company Vivendi. These acquisitions were part of a larger general trend. Throughout the 1990s, companies outside the United States spent hundreds of billions of dollars buying American firms.

In addition, all the Majors routinely drew financing from foreign sources, ranging from large companies such as France's television concern Canal Plus to investment circles formed for the purpose of speculating in movies. As wings of multinational conglomerates, the studios attracted high-powered international investment. In 2000, 98 percent of film funds raised by German tax shelters went to finance Hollywood pictures, and about one-fifth of studio pictures drew on them.

Meanwhile Hollywood's domestic audience was leveling off. (Rising box-office revenues were due primarily to rising ticket prices.) That meant that the industry's growth would have to come from overseas markets. In the 1990s, former Soviet bloc countries began expanding exhibition; and in the 2000s, China opened more widely to American imports. Producers responded by building in appeals to overseas audiences—casting local stars, shooting on location, and formulating stories such as *Kung Fu Panda* (2008) that would resonate regionally.

During the same period, many nations created modern production facilities and offered rebates and low-cost labor to Hollywood productions. Studio complexes in Russia, China, Canada, and England were joined by Poland, Hungary, the Dominican Republic, and many other places competing for American money, in a cinematic parallel to global manufacturing's "race to the bottom."

Since the 1970s, US films routinely garnered more than half of box-office receipts in Western Europe and Latin America. By the 1990s, Hollywood had won big shares of the market in Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan. First Japan, then China, furnished the Majors' biggest overseas national audience. Although Hollywood produced only a small fraction of the world's feature films, it garnered about 75 percent of theatrical motion picture revenues and even more of video rentals and purchases.

The Media Conglomerates

How did Hollywood cinema strengthen its hold on world culture? Many European and Asian film industries declined in the 1970s and 1980s, often because of competition from television and other leisure activities. Hollywood films, particularly megapictures, could benefit from weakened local production. Moreover, US companies had often stayed out of markets where admission prices were very low because they could not recoup much of their investment there. But as more people joined the middle class in Asia, Russia, and elsewhere, they could afford higher ticket prices, and the US firms moved in.

A big weapon was Hollywood's trade association, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). It had offices in sixty nations, with employees promoting pictures and lobbying local politicians for support. The MPAA helped the Majors launch coproductions in Latin America, creating regional and worldwide hits such as *Y tu mamá también* (2001) and bringing new directors into the Hollywood industry (see South America and Mexico: Interrupted Reforms and Partnerships with Hollywood p. 593).

Some European countries, led by France, launched trade initiatives to cut the MPAA's power, but they were largely ineffectual. Governments and EU agencies continued to subsidize local films, while audiences gravitated to American ones.

The US studios also benefited from the vast power of the multinationals to which they now belonged. The entertainment conglomerates that had acquired most of the Hollywood firms in the 1980s and 1990s were among the world's top ten media companies. In 2001, the combined revenue of the six giants came to $130 billion. Each conglomerate, linked to international funding and audiences, could act globally. Viacom, parent to Paramount, owned MTV, which broadcast in eight languages throughout the world, and the company programmed more than 2,600 movies and series per year for international television. Viacom also owned the Blockbuster video rental chain. Similarly, News Corporation owned not only 20th Century Fox but also newspapers, book publishers, and the rights to broadcast major sports events, such as NFL football and Manchester United soccer. News Corporation's television holdings, particularly its satellite outlets BskyB and Asian Star TV, reached three-quarters of the world's population.

By owning media outlets in many countries, a conglomerate could gain access to new markets, competing with smaller-scale domestic companies. The conglomerate could also reap economies of scale. The modern media empire, dependent on "content providers," sought synergy (see The Search for Synergy p. 646) between a novel, a movie, a video game, or a television series and other divisions, such as record companies.

The Disney empire became the leader in Hollywood's global activities. The animated films were designed for the world market, and merchandise was ubiquitous. Disneyland parks were built in Japan, France, and China, and stores were planted in European and Asian capitals. Disney flourished with branded hits from Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm, and its own animation unit (see Disney World Gets Bigger p. 650). In 2019, the company completed acquisition of most of 20th Century Fox's media holdings, including major cable and satellite channels in Europe, India, and East Asia. Disney's theatrical releases of 2019 yielded $13 billion at the world box office. *Avengers: Endgame* earned $850 million in the United States but nearly $2 billion in other markets.

Cooperation and Cooptation

The Disney company taught Hollywood to keep the world market in mind at all times. Studios imported directors—for example, Hong Kong's John Woo, Germany's Roland Emmerich, Mexico's Alfonso Cuarón, and Russia's Timur Bekmambetov—who supposedly knew how to please foreign audiences. Stars had to tour the world to promote their movies. Above all, producers sought a "global film." *Batman* (1989), *The Lion King* (1994), *Independence Day* (1996), *Men in Black* (1997), *Titanic* (1997), *The Lord of the Rings* (2001–2003), the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise (2003–), *The Dark Knight* (2008), *Iron Man* (2008), and later adventures of the Marvel superheroes—these were mega-events that aimed to attract every viewer, everywhere. *Jurassic Park* (1993) was an early model of the global film. (See *Jurassic Park*, Global Film box.)

The blockbuster strategy succeeded hugely in attracting a worldwide audience. Throughout the 2000s and the 2010s, the world's ten top-grossing films earned between 50 percent and 70 percent of their revenues outside North America. The overseas box office for the Harry Potter franchise routinely tripled the domestic revenues. Domestic failures could do spectacularly elsewhere. *Warcraft* (2016) earned less than $50 million at home, but took in $388 million abroad.

JURASSIC PARK, GLOBAL FILM

Jurassic Park was an unprecedented financial success. It earned a worldwide box-office gross of $913 million and yielded millions more from cable, broadcast television, and home video. Sales of merchandise ran to more than $1 billion. Until *Titanic* (1997) surpassed it, *Jurassic Park* defined how large the market for a movie could be.

To a greater degree than earlier blockbusters, *Jurassic Park* was designed to be a global hit. Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment mounted a careful strategy with Universal's international distribution arm. They branded the film with a red-yellow-black dinosaur silhouette that would provide instant recognition all over the world. Publicists trumpeted the technical advances that had led to computer-generated creatures (**29.1**). But, for most of the campaign, Spielberg showed no images featuring the dinosaurs. Months before release, theaters screened trailers showing only evocative bits of the background story. Eventually, Spielberg released one image of a tyrannosaurus tipping over a jeep. To see more monsters, audiences would have to pay.

Internationally, the film rolled out fairly fast. It was released in the United States and Brazil in June 1993, most of Latin America and Asia in July and August, and Europe in September and October. This schedule ensured that *Jurassic Park* would be featured in the world's press throughout the summer and fall. France, the country that protested most loudly against Hollywood imperialism, was one of the last countries to see the movie; ironically, the opening-week grosses there were the highest outside the United States. After the film had played out in most countries, it opened in India and Pakistan, becoming the top-earning Western film in both countries.

Worried that he had missed some chances to exploit *E.T.* (1982), Spielberg coordinated *Jurassic Park*'s tie-ins with great care. Multinational companies such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Shell Oil, and Marks & Spencer plunged in. Amblin and Universal assembled a merchandising team for each region, licensing hundreds of items, from schoolbags to dinosaur-shaped cookies. Relying on children's fascination with dinosaurs, marketing teams synchronized the release with special museum displays and television documentaries.

Jurassic Park

29.1 Realistic blur for computer-generated dinosaurs roaming *Jurassic Park*.

Universal drove a hard bargain with exhibitors, demanding exceptionally large shares of ticket sales. But the pressure paid off. *Jurassic Park* widened markets for US films. It helped break the hold of Hong Kong films on East Asia, and it showed that there was a large Indian audience for Hindi-dubbed Hollywood films. As the biggest film to enter the emerging markets of Eastern Europe, it taught exhibitors Western marketing techniques, such as blasting the public with TV spots, comic books, and souvenirs.

Some critics wondered if Spielberg was having a laugh on everyone. By using the film's trademark as the logo for the park in the story, did he suggest that very little separated the movie's world from ours? Were we the suckers whom the lawyer in the film hopes to entice into the park? Was the movie just the last piece of merchandise in the chain?

As a result, Hollywood based its big projects on best-selling books known in other countries, such as the Potter series, as well as on tested offerings such as the *Transformers* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchises. Stars were often more popular abroad than at home, with Tom Cruise and Sylvester Stallone reliably drawing international audiences. Above all, the studios embraced the franchise model (see Franchise Fever p. 649). The installments in a series could build an international following across many years, as the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series (2003 on) proved.

To maximize the global audience, and to undercut piracy, studios increasingly aimed at day-and-date release, putting the film on offshore screens at the same. *Spider-Man 3* (2007) became the first film to launch day and date on nearly 17,000 screens worldwide, generating $230 million in six days. Ten years later, *The Fate of the Furious*, the eighth entry in a huge franchise, opened in 65 territories on the same weekend and took in a record-breaking $534 million. Only 20 percent of that total came from North America.

It was not only homegrown movies that allowed Hollywood to penetrate other countries. For decades, the Majors had invested in the overseas film trade, a process that began to intensify in the 1980s. The studios sank money into cable and satellite television, theater chains, and theme parks. Because of the power of the Majors' distribution network, many local films were marketed by Hollywood companies. In Japan, the domestically made Studio Ghibli animations were distributed by Disney, while Sony profitably distributed *The Mermaid* (2016) outside China. US studios also stepped up the number of coproductions they mounted with overseas firms.

One advantage in going global was that certain activities were less strictly regulated outside the United States. Even after vertical integration had been outlawed at home, the studios continued to own foreign theaters and local distribution companies. Block booking and blind bidding, forbidden in the United States, were routine in foreign markets. These practices carried even more clout when multinational media empires were backing them up.

From the 1990s through the 2010s, the Majors dominated nearly every national market. When the Motion Picture Association of American shortened its name to the Motion Picture Association (MPA) in 2019, it seemed simply an acknowledgment of Hollywood's global centrality. A *Variety* headline summed up the trend: "Earth to Hollywood: You Win."[1]

Multiplexing the Planet

At the start of the 1990s, the United States contained about one screen for every 10,000 people. Most of Western Europe had far fewer screens per capita, and densely populated Japan had only one for every 60,000 people. The Majors came to believe that most regions were "underscreened" and failed to tap the potential market. The studios and the US independents were pumping out many films, but most countries had comparatively few places to show them.

Multiplexing (see Multiplexing and Megaplexing: The New Face of Exhibition p. 654) seemed the natural solution. Multiscreen cinemas had increased attendance in North America by reinforcing the moviegoing habit, so why would they not spur demand in other markets? The economies of scale would apply abroad, and with more screens available, more Hollywood films could open. If the new theaters were more luxurious than the older movie houses, ticket prices could be boosted. And, if the Majors operated multiplexes, then they could monitor box-office receipts accurately and control access to prints, thus limiting piracy.

The idea was too tempting to resist, especially because European exhibitors had already started building multiplexes on their own. In 1988, Kinepolis opened on the outskirts of Brussels, with 24 screens, an IMAX theater, and 7,400 seats—at that time, the largest movie complex in the world. The Kinepolis company was formed to build cineplexes throughout Belgium, France, Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. In the 1990s, Germany's CinemaxX and other exhibition firms followed. Soon American firms launched multiplexes in the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Because European exhibition firms were well-entrenched, the US companies usually partnered with regional chains. By 2000, Western Europe was blanketed with multiplexes.

Now Hollywood was exporting not just American movies but the American moviegoing experience. Snacks were tailored to local tastes, but popcorn, previously a US specialty, proved surprisingly popular. Some cineplexes went beyond the American standard, offering VIP auditoriums with champagne, hot meals, and waiter service. Large-format cinema proved especially popular. By 2016, IMAX had nearly 1,100 screens worldwide.

Multiplexes usually boosted attendance. In the early 1990s, European box-office returns soared after a decade of decline. Germany had its biggest surge in attendance since World War II. Customers proved willing to pay more for a bright, comfortable, modernized venue. In Bangkok, the Golden Village complex, with only ten screens, grossed nearly as much as all other screens in Thailand combined. In India, more "underscreened" than any other large country, multiplexes constituted only a quarter of the screens, but they yielded 70 percent of box-office revenues.

Attendance at European films jumped sharply in the late 1990s, and most observers believed that multiplexes were partly responsible. Local movies appeared to benefit; playing alongside Hollywood hits made them seem more like event films. By 2000, although many countries were becoming over-'plexed, films from the fifteen EU-member countries accounted for about a quarter of all EU theater admissions.

Multiplexing opened up new territories in the 2000s. Mexico's Organizacion Ramirez Cinemas grew into one of the world's biggest chains, holding nearly 1,700 screens throughout Mexico and Central and South America. The Australian firms Hoyts and Village Roadshow had assisted the multiplex boom in Asia, but after a market slump they pulled back to home territory. This opened the door for local and regional circuits in Taiwan, Singapore, and other countries to grow and consolidate. The ruling families of the oil-rich Persian Gulf states set up entertainment

centers throughout the Middle East. More than half of the Arab world's population was younger than 25, so the opportunities for a youth market were strong.

The biggest surge in screens took place in Russia and China. American investment helped launch multiplex development in both countries, but soon neighboring players stepped in. China benefited particularly from regionalism, as South Korean, Malaysian, and Hong Kong exhibitors scrambled for a piece of that vast market. By 2016, China had the second biggest attendance after the United States and Canada, and Russia entered the top ten international markets.

Thanks largely to multiplexing, the number of screens on earth expanded drastically, from around 93,000 in 1990 to more than 190,000 in 2019. The multiscreen movie theater became an entertainment center for the public and a profit center for Hollywood around the world.

REGIONAL ALLIANCES, MEDIA EMPIRES, AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL FILM

Since the end of World War I, Hollywood cinema both sustained and threatened other countries' film industries. Exhibitors welcomed American films, which were often more popular than local ones. Distributors also benefited from handling Hollywood imports. But the production sector was constantly fighting for its share of the market and its power in local film culture.

Some strategies for combating Hollywood involved government legislation, as when quotas or tariffs were erected. Another strategy harked back to the 1920s "Film Europe" movement (see "Film Europe" p. 145), as countries cooperated to block America's expansion. In the most powerful countries, such as France, Germany, and eventually China, local media conglomerates could try to extend their power internationally. And, as in the 1920s, there remained the dream of producing films as universally popular as those coming out of America. Could someone outside Hollywood make a global film?

Europe and Asia Try to Compete

Globalization fostered stronger ties within regions. As money, products, and ideas flowed across national boundaries, countries sharing a culture or a language began to forge trade alliances and security arrangements. In film, several regional forces, defined both by language and culture, emerged to challenge Hollywood's global reach.

While there were some important Latin American media conglomerates, the most powerful competition to the major film companies came from elsewhere. A prosperous and heavily populated region, Western Europe (including the United Kingdom) was for several decades Hollywood's most important overseas market. At the end of the 1990s, film, television, and video in the principal European countries were annually earning the studios $7 billion to $8 billion. The Asia Pacific region was a fast-growing market as well. Together, Western Europe and Asia generated three-quarters of Hollywood's overseas revenue. This degree of power led to obvious questions. If nations cooperated, could they defeat Hollywood in their region?

Since the end of World War II, national governments and the European Community had encouraged coproductions, which pooled talents from many countries in order to compete with Hollywood (see International Cooperation p. 312). A EU program, Eurimages, was established in 1988 to finance coproductions. Shortly afterward, the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production was developed to override the two-party coproduction treaties that made multiple alliances difficult. In 2017, the Convention's terms were revised to allow European producers to work with Canada, Australia, Latin America, and other partners outside the continent. If Hollywood thought globally, European filmmakers had to do the same.

Other trends favored regional cooperation. Between 1996 and 2000, the European Union shifted its MEDIA program (see The European Community p. 547) from funding production to training filmmakers, developing projects, and expanding distribution. On the exhibition side, MEDIA and Eurimages helped fund theaters that pledged to screen at least 50 percent European films. The affiliation, called Europa Cinemas, had nearly 900 screens in fifty-one countries, including some in the Middle East and the former Soviet states.

Media Empires, West and East

In Europe, as in the United States, antitrust legislation began to relax during the 1980s and large media concentrations began to emerge. The key players included Bertelsmann of Germany, the largest media combine in Europe; Germany's Kirch and Constantin companies; Italy's Berlusconi Group; and Havas of France (eventually to be acquired by Vivendi). The former giants of French film, Gaumont and Pathé, were now small by comparison. Conglomerates acquired them in order to move into film distribution, television, and theatrical exhibition.

With the exception of Vivendi's purchase of Universal, European media companies made only small forays into film production. But they did invest in delivery systems

such as cable and satellite television, along with continental licensing rights. Before Kirch went bankrupt in 2002, it controlled television rights to more than 15,000 feature films. An exception to the Europeans' hands-off approach was StudioCanal's acquisition of theatrical and video distribution outlets in the three biggest European markets—France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

European producers had problems taking their films to nearby countries; no more than a fifth of those films would be shown outside their country of origin. But East Asian cinema had been strongly regional for years. The political association ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) worked somewhat like the European Union. Member nations moved toward creating a fully integrated market, and trade across borders boomed throughout the 1990s. Such regional initiatives set the stage for stronger links among Asia's film industries.

Another factor favored tight bonds among them. Mainland Chinese had emigrated to Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, and other Pacific Rim states. As a result, Hong Kong films could enter many of those markets (see Hong Kong p. 626). After Deng Xiaoping's reform initiatives of the 1980s, Chinese affiliations grew stronger. Although China forbade direct investment from Taiwanese businesses, Taiwanese producers set up companies in Hong Kong to fund Mainland films. Hong Kong directors began shooting on the mainland. By the 2010s, they would be making mainland films regularly.

Nearby countries gained regional momentum. South Korea exported sleek thrillers and action pictures. Japanese stars appeared in Chinese and Korean movies, and Japanese companies financed major works by Hou Hsiao-hsien, Edward Yang, and Wong Kar-wai. Hong Kong director Peter Chan founded Applause, a company creating coproductions along European lines. Chan's model of pooling funds and assembling stars from across East Asia became widespread.

Instead of using bank financing or national or regional subsidies, as in Europe, these coproductions typically pieced together backing from corporations and private investors. By mixing stars from different countries, the Applause model also tapped into the blending of East Asian tastes. Japanese pop music was the rage in Taipei and Seoul. Japanese TV romances were must viewing in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and South Korean soap operas drew large audiences in China. The pan-Asian film fitted into trends in the region's popular culture.

The Rise of China By the 2010s, one nation seemed to be in a position to challenge Hollywood. The booming Chinese economy fostered entrepreneurs who founded powerful media companies (see The Dragon Grows Stronger p. 638). These were both competing with American conglomerates and offering to collaborate with them.

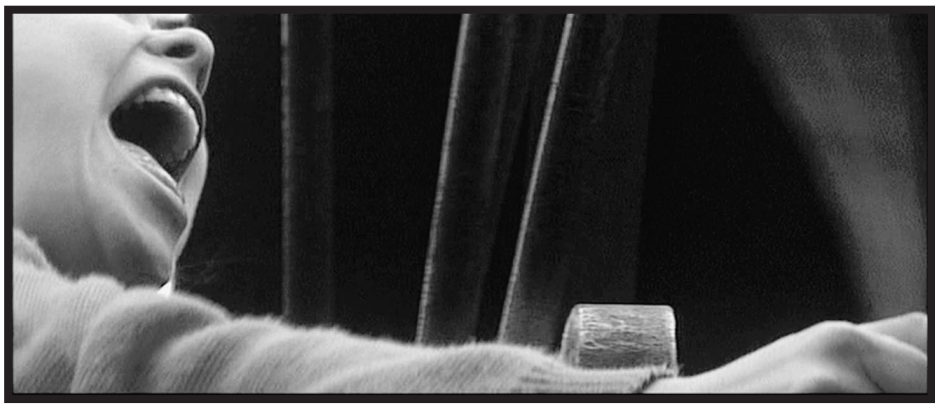
China's global cinema power grew out of the multiplex strategy. In the 2000s, with China having very few modern screens, the government encouraged theater building. To satisfy a population with more money to spend, dozens of new screens appeared every day. By the end of 2016, China had more than 41,000 screens, more than any other country.

The key player was the real estate conglomerate Dalian Wanda Group (see The Dragon Grows Stronger p. 639). After creating China's largest theater circuit, Wanda's leader Wang Jianlin bought America's large AMC chain. Acquisition of European and American circuits followed, to the point that Wanda controlled more screens than any other company. Its chains garnered 15 percent of global box office.

Wang expanded into production by partnering with, and then taking over, Legendary Entertainment. Wanda became the first Chinese company to own a significant US production unit. Huayi Brothers, Alibaba, Tencent, and other Chinese media empires forged alliances with American firms. The companies invested in both single pictures and studio production slates including films such as *Sicario* (2015) and *The Martian* (2015). By 2015, China's investment in Hollywood was more than $5 billion and growing. The trend came in the midst of a broader influx of Chinese capital, which included acquisition of hotels, oil companies, and branches of General Electric.

The spending spree recalled Japanese firms' purchase of studios in 1989–1990 (see The Search for Synergy p. 646), but there were important differences. Japan's movie market was fairly small. By contrast, in the mid-2010s, the Chinese market was huge and growing. American films backed by Chinese money could gain access to billions of viewers. In turn, mainland investors could benefit from the revenues flowing out of Hollywood's global distribution system. Eventually, some hoped, Chinese filmmakers might make their own *Avatar* or *Jurassic World*.

There was no mistaking the moguls' ultimate ambitions. Wang Jianlin declared his aim to unseat the biggest brand in Hollywood. "The era of blindly following Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse is over."[2] But in 2017, the government clamped down on companies' indebtedness and foreign acquisitions. At the news, the stock shares of Wanda and other major firms plunged in value by billions of dollars. In response, Wang sold off his theme parks and hotels, abandoned plans to buy an American studio, and said he would focus on his Chinese investments.



Dancer in the Dark

29.2 One of several cameras catches Björk off-center as she climbs aboard a train, singing "I've Seen It All" (*Dancer in the Dark*).

Global Films from Outside Hollywood?

Media giants outside America might buy up distribution outlets and theater screens, and they could pour billions into Hollywood films. But could they make global blockbusters? The early thinking was that a truly global film would need to succeed in the United States, still the world's most lucrative single market. The film would therefore need to be in English and include American stars. And to get wide distribution, a Hollywood company would need to be involved.

Genre and Arthouse Exports The success stories were chiefly in the genre and arthouse realms. An outstanding example was Working Title, a London-based company founded in 1984. It became an international force with comedies starring Hugh Grant and Rowan Atkinson. Over forty years, its slate mixed popular fare (the Bridget Jones series, 2004 on), offbeat genre material (*Shaun of the Dead*, 2004), and prestige projects such as *United 93* (2006) and *The Theory of Everything* (2014). The result was a distinctive brand of British moviemaking that had international reach.

More spectacular was the rise of Luc Besson's French company EuropaCorp, which was firmly committed to big-audience moviemaking. Besson broke into mass-market cinema with popular action films he directed (*Nikita*, 1990; *Taxi*, 1998). He found international success with *The Fifth Element* (1997), which sought to rival Hollywood blockbusters. Shot in English, distributed by Columbia, starring Bruce Willis and Chris Tucker, the film presents a science-fiction extravaganza festooned with special effects reminiscent of European comic books (**Color Plate 29.1**).

Besson built up EuropaCorp by casting international stars in English language crime thrillers. He hired young directors to make films starring kung-fu master Jet Li (*Kiss of the Dragon*, 2001) and scowling Jason Statham (the *Transporter* series, 2001 on). Liam Neeson, a respected dramatic actor, found a parallel career as a disheveled action hero by starring in the *Taken* series (2008 on). EuropaCorp also supported European art films and American independent projects, along with Besson's own directorial efforts like *Lucy* (2013) and animated features.

Besson even established a modern studio complex, Cité du Cinéma, outside Paris. There he hoped to replicate the impact of *The Fifth Element* with the big-budget *Valerian and the City of Ten Thousand Planets* (2017). That film's worldwide failure contributed to the virtual bankruptcy of EuropaCorp in 2019.

The Dane Lars von Trier created much smaller-scale global films by shooting in English but spurning US funding. Turning away from the fastidious and polished look of his early work, von Trier won fame with *Breaking the Waves* (1996). When an oil-rig worker is rendered impotent by a job accident, he urges his wife to have sex with other men and tell him about it. The result could have been sordid, but von Trier's free-camera treatment and hallucinatory landscape interludes create a moving account of shared love in the face of community scorn. Von Trier filmed in 35 mm, transferred the footage to video in order to drain out most of the color, then transferred it back to film. *Breaking the Waves* won the Grand Prize at Cannes and made von Trier one of the world's most noteworthy directors.

The look of *Breaking the Waves* was inspired by the loose camerawork in the television series *Homicide: Life on the Streets*. "The hand-held camera gives quite a different feeling of intimacy," von Trier remarked. "A film must be like a pebble in your shoe."[3] He pushed the free camera approach (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 566) still further in another English-language feature, *Dancer in the Dark* (2000). This somber musical fable starred pop singer Björk and an international cast. Shot on digital video, *Dancer* used many cameras to capture the musical numbers, allowing von Trier to cut among peculiar angles with jarring effect (**29.2**). The nervous, almost irritating, style worked against the fluidity traditionally associated with song and dance. At this period, von Trier also became a founder of the Dogme 95 movement (see Back to Basics: Dogme 95 box).

BACK TO BASICS: DOGME 95

Most film movements were tied to local cultures. German Expressionism, Italian Neorealism, the French New Wave, and other schools we have considered arose within one nation. But one film movement that began locally shifted to a global platform.

Late one night in 1995, after serious drinking, Danish directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg took twenty-five minutes to jot down a manifesto calling for a new purity in filmmaking. The new waves of the 1960s had betrayed their revolutionary calling, and emerging technology was going to democratize film. "For the first time, anyone can make cinema."[4] But some discipline was necessary, so von Trier and Vinterberg laid down an "indisputable set of rules" for the new avant-garde: a "Vow of Chastity."

The vow required that the film be shot on location, using only props naturally found there. The camera had to be handheld and the sound recorded directly, so music could arise only from within the scene itself. The film had to be shot in the 1.33:1 format, in color, and without filters or laboratory reworking. It could not be set in another period of history or be a genre film (apparently ruling out police and action pictures, science fiction, and other Hollywood formulas). The film could not include "superficial action": "Murders, weapons, etc. must not occur." The director must not be credited. Above all, a director had to pledge that the film would be not an artwork but "a way of forcing the truth out of my characters and settings." Soon two other Danish filmmakers signed on. The four created the Dogme 95 collective.

Distributed at a 1995 Paris symposium devoted to cinema's hundredth anniversary, the manifesto attracted little notice until 1998. That year the film labeled Dogme #1, Vinterberg's *The Celebration*, won the Jury Prize at Cannes, and Dogme #2, von Trier's *The Idiots*, won a critics' award at the London Film Festival. *Mifune* (1999), by Søren Kragh-Jacobsen, was Dogme #3. After winning a major prize in Berlin, it went on to gross $2 million internationally. Dogme began issuing certificates for projects that adhered to the Vow of Chastity, while directors who strayed from it (as most did) made public confession on the Dogme website.

Because the Dogme films were closely tied to von Trier's Zentropa company, many critics dismissed the movement as a publicity stunt. But the Dogme group insisted that they were serious. They held that film's increasingly complex technology and bureaucracy hampered genuine creation. One could fight Hollywood's globalization by going back to basics; Kragh-Jakobsen compared the group to rockers rediscovering unplugged music. Like John Cassavetes and the Direct Cinema filmmakers, they sought to capture the unrepeatable here and now. The vow declared that the director must "regard the instant as more important than the whole."

The Celebration

29.3 Although photographic quality suffered, the mini-DV cameras used on *The Celebration* enabled cinematographer Anthony Dod Mantle to get unusual angles and not intrude on the actors.

Although most Dogme films were fairly traditional dramas, the actors and directors often worked out the scene without a script. For *The Celebration*, the actors sometimes operated the camera, and all were present to witness each scene. Dogme directors favored digital video; Vinterberg noted that actors tended to forget the presence of small cameras (**29.3**). Dogme #4, Kristian Levring's *The King Is Alive* (2001), used three cameras so that the actors never knew when they were onscreen. Dogme cinematographers roamed around a scene, and the results helped popularize the free-camera style (see Art Cinema: Slowing Down and Jumping Around p. 566).

Von Trier claimed that the formal rigidity of his earlier films dissatisfied him, and the vow provided a rationale for the free-camera technique of *Breaking the Waves*. Vinterberg agreed: "I had the impression that my way of filming was imprisoned by conventions: returning to standard techniques to make people cry, use artificial light for a night scene. . . . There are things in cinema that you're supposed to do, and you do them without asking questions."[5]

From France and Spain to South Korea and the United States, filmmakers launched Dogme projects. Lone Sherfig's *Italian for Beginners* (2001), the first Vow of Chastity film made by a woman, won a major prize at Berlin and became an international arthouse hit. By 2005, the trend was considered over, but its impact lingered. The Vow's demands recalled back-to-basics trends such as Italian Neorealism and the French New Wave, now suited to a new film culture. Reliant on video, promoted on the Internet, and launched at a film festival, Dogme 95 became both local and international—a film movement suited to a global age.

Von Trier embraced controversy, trying something audacious with each project. *Dogville* (2003) and *Manderlay* (2005) were critiques of American values, played out in an abstract space of chalkmarks and minimal props, reminiscent of *Our Town*. *The Five Obstructions* (2003) flung down a set of challenges to an elder experimentalist, Jørgen Leth (see New Mergers p. 539). *Antichrist* (2009) was a domestic drama that turns into a horror film; *Melancholia* (2011) showed a tension-filled family facing the end of the world (**Video 29.1**); *Nymphomaniac* (2014) was a lengthy, explicit account of a woman's sexual history.

The success of *Breaking the Waves* allowed von Trier to expand his company, Zentropa, into a microstudio. Located at a former military base, Zentropa opened divisions specializing in children's films, pornography, TV commercials, music videos, Internet films, and international productions. By 2001, Zentropa and its affiliates were releasing several features and many hours of film and television each year. While Working Title turned out mainstream comedies and dramas, and EuropaCorp concentrated on genre pictures, Zentropa found a modest market for global art movies.

Global Efforts from Asia Asian filmmakers also sought to mount global films, aimed at either mass-market audiences or the art house. Most efforts failed, but one entry, underwritten by Hollywood, pointed the way. Sony Asia was formed as an attempt to support Asian films that could capture an international audience, and Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) did that.

The quiet and modest Lee, born in Taiwan but trained and based in New York, might not have seemed likely to become a global director. Yet *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994) were among the ten best-grossing foreign language films in the United States. Producer James Schamus of the independent company Good Machine cowrote the script for *Crouching Tiger* and stitched together financing from the United States, Europe, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The result, shot in China and featuring two young Mainland stars and two older Hong Kong actors, blended romance, exotic locations, and graceful airborne martial arts (**Color Plate 29.2**; **Video 29.2**).

Crouching Tiger was marketed shrewdly, using film festivals to build word of mouth slowly and aiming advertising at a wide range of audiences, from art-film devotees to teenagers and kung-fu fans. Budgeted at only $15 million, it wound up grossing more than $210 million, more than half of that in the United States. It was the most financially successful Asian film to date and won four Academy Awards. With dialogue in Mandarin, *Crouching Tiger* proved that a global triumph did not have to be in English.

The Great Wall

29.4 Airborne warriors battle monsters in *The Great Wall*, China's answer to Hollywood's superhero fantasies.

Lee's film opened up the United States and Europe to new currents in Asian cinema. Hollywood companies began buying rights to horror films, gangster sagas, and comedies. The South Korean monster films *The Host* (2006) and *D-War* (2007) were released around the world. Most strikingly, Chinese historical spectacle swept onto screens as never before. After *Crouching Tiger* came the mainland costume pictures *Hero* (2002), *House of Flying Daggers* (2004), and *Curse of the Golden Flower* (2006) (see *Hero's* Victories p. 637). Packed with stars from different nations and often benefiting from US investment, these productions gained significant exposure in Western countries.

Successful as they were in the arthouse market, these films were not blockbusters in the United States. Could China produce one of those? The ever-ambitious Dalian Wanda company joined with the US company Legendary Entertainment to create a global film. At $150 million, which did not include advertising costs, *The Great Wall* (2016) was the most expensive production in Chinese history.

Wanda and Legendary followed the *Fifth Element* strategy. *The Great Wall* was mostly in English, it used up-to-date special effects, and it featured a major US star, Matt Damon. Because fantasy adventures had international appeal, it was built around monsters and battle scenes akin to those in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, though with a Chinese inflection (**29.4**). And like *Jurassic Park*, it was advertised on a massive scale. In China's first world-class promotional campaign, producers mounted more than sixty online videos, along with trailers and three music videos. A special press conference introduced the film's world of Five Armies, identifying leaders, weapons, and the creatures the humans battle.

Wanda's control of the AMC chain allowed *The Great Wall* to be released on 3,300 US and Canadian screens. But it garnered only $45 million in North America, as compared with its $250 million earnings elsewhere. The mainland and regional market was big enough to support Chinese blockbusters, but they could not easily compete

on Hollywood's home ground. With the Chinese government's 2017 edict to restrict borrowing for overseas investment, filmmakers faced serious obstacles to making blockbusters for Europe and North America.

Hollywood provided nearly all global hits, but occasionally other countries found worldwide success. When the Munich-based media firm Constantin produced *Resident Evil* (2002), based on a video game, that entry and its five sequels garnered comparatively little from US screens. But elsewhere, the series yielded nearly a billion dollars. The Indian strongman epic *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* (2017) secured $20 million in America but found nearly $300 million internationally. Occasionally, then, a global film did not have to capture America. By 2014 that territory yielded only a quarter of world box office.

DIASPORIC CINEMA

Globalization sent millions of people on the road. After World War II, as the European powers gave up their colonies, populations began to migrate. The flow was largely from less prosperous areas to lands of opportunity. People from India and Pakistan came to England. Algerians and West Africans came to France. Latin Americans and Asians immigrated to Australia and North America, while the fall of the USSR sent people from the former Soviet states to seek their fortunes in Western Europe, Israel, and the United States. People fled Mao's China for other parts of East Asia, while Filipinos searched for work in Hong Kong. The world became a web of crisscrossing diasporas, with people trying to sink new roots while still yearning for the lands they had left.

These shifting populations created a form of "world film" quite far from the dreams of the US Majors. For one thing, an emigrant audience sought out movies from home. Films from Mexico, Turkey, Egypt, China, Nigeria, and other countries were available on video all over the world. Diasporan Indians' support for DVDs and day-and-date theater screenings boosted the industry's income very substantially (see Indian Cinema on the Global Stage p. 607). In the United States, the Mexican import *Instructions Not Included* (2013) won $44 million theatrically, mostly from Hispanic moviegoers. Nigerian emigrants even set up a production base in the United States to make pseudo-Nollywood releases.

Filmmakers began explicitly addressing diasporan subjects and themes. Ever since cinema began, directors and other creative personnel traveled among countries, but the heightened pace and greater dispersion of migration after 1980 created something new. Hollywood émigrés such as Fritz Lang and Maurice Tourneur did not make films about leaving Germany or France. In the closing years of the twentieth century, though, filmmakers began to explore the experience of migration, the sense of floating among cultures, speaking minority languages, being shut off from the mainstream, and living divided social lives.

Films of dispersion and displacement might appear in any country. In America, *Mississippi Masala* (1991) dramatizes a romance between an African American man and a woman whose family fled Uganda. The director, Mira Nair, was born in India but relocated to the United States. In Germany, Kutlig Ataman's *Lola and Billy the Kid* (1999) portrays a young German Turk who learns that the brother whom he believed dead is actually a transvestite performing in gay nightclubs. Another German director, Fatih Akin, made several films exploring conflicts of Turkish assimilation, most famously *The Edge of Heaven* (2007).

Partly because of generous subsidies, France played host to decades of diasporan cinema. In Paris, the Peronist Fernando Solanas filmed *Tangos: Exile of Gardel* (1985), a reflection on Argentine popular culture as recalled from afar (see Argentina p. 596). Tony Gatlif, a Romany living in France, made *Latcho Drom* (1993) as a tribute to gypsy music. Iranian director Asghar Farhadi's *The Past* (2013) chronicled the family tensions of exiles in Paris.

Ladj Ly was born in Mali but grew up in a Parisian suburb housing families from many countries. Ly made short films and web videos, recording police actions and the riots of 2005. He turned from documentary to fiction in *Les Misérables* (2019), which shows three policemen of different ethnic backgrounds confronting gangs in Ly's neighborhood. Financed by government agencies and private investment, the tension-filled drama won festival prizes and an Academy Award nomination.

Many diasporic filmmakers were born in the host culture or had lived there long, but they understood the problems facing recent arrivals. Iranian-American Ramin Bahrani's *Man Push Cart* (2005) showed the daily struggles of an immigrant street vendor. In Paris, *beurs*, second-generation Arabs from North Africa, created novels and films about their society, as in Mehdi Charif's portrait of a transvestite, *Miss Mona* (1986).

In diasporic films, often the second-generation character gains access to his or her roots not through direct memory but through popular culture. Gurinder Chadha grew up in England watching Indian movies with her father, so her *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) uses dazzling imagery reminiscent of Bollywood romances to portray the adventures of Indian women visiting the seaside resort of Blackpool (**29.5**). Chadha found international success with *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002), in which an Indian girl learning to

Bhaji on the Beach

29.5 *Bhaji on the Beach*: A middle-aged woman romps with her lover in a sequence reminiscent of a Bollywood musical.

play soccer comes into conflict with her family. Chadha wanted to avoid the stereotyped confrontations: "That's one of the things I'm trying to show with this film—that with discussion, with respect, with communication, it doesn't all just boil down to culture-clash clichés."[6]

As each nation became more ethnically mixed, filmmakers were attracted by the dramatic possibilities of emigration. Again, French directors were in the vanguard, and the government helped fund projects showing the lives of new French citizens. In *La Haine* ("Hatred," 1996), Mathieu Kassovitz, himself an emigrant from Hungary, filmed suburban housing-project gangs that include beurs and French-born workers (**29.6**). Jacques Audiard's *Dheepan* (2015) shows refugees from the civil war in Sri Lanka forming a family and trying to survive in a drug-ridden neighborhood. Celine Sciamma's *Girlhood* (2014) centers on an African-French teenager who joins a gang of young thieves.

Perhaps the most widely seen work of diasporic cinema was a memoir of Iranian exile. Marjane Satrapi left Iran as a teenager and moved to Vienna, then Paris, then returned home before finally taking up residence in France. There she created the autobiographical graphic novel *Persepolis*, which portrays Iran's Islamic revolution through the eyes of a girl obsessed with Marxism, Bruce Lee, and Iron Butterfly. Later volumes recorded young Marjane's experiences of war and her emigration to Vienna and Paris.

In 2007, Satrapi turned her story into an animated feature (**29.7**). The film traces Marjane's pride in being Iranian, her fears of governmental repression, her love for the family she leaves behind, and the impossibility of her feeling at home anywhere. "A world with a hundred kinds of home," writes Pico Iyer, "will accommodate a thousand kinds of homesickness."[7]

THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT

Film festivals emerged soon after World War II (see Film Festivals p. 312), reflecting the growth in transnational production, the decline of the Hollywood studio system, and the expansion of independent filmmaking. In the decades after Cannes, Berlin, and Venice established their events, the film festival quickly became a central institution within world film culture. Most of the non-Hollywood feature films we have discussed in Part Four and Part Five, from Italian Neorealism to the cinemas of the postcolonial world, gained international stature through festivals. Festivals brought to attention the influential auteurs of the 1950s and 1960s, the various new waves and young cinemas, Third World political filmmaking, and most new trends since the 1970s.

La Haine

29.6 While would-be gangster Vinz stares at the viewer, his friend Hubert fires a flare gun into the face of a club's bouncer (*La Haine*).

Persepolis

29.7 In *Persepolis*, Marjane's youthful rebellion brings out cultural intolerance.

Despite its role in promoting films for a world market, the festival circuit was still quite small before the 1980s. New media changed that. After videotape allowed filmmakers to submit films for previewing, festivals proliferated. In 1981, there were around 100 annual festivals. Twenty years later, there were more than 700. By 2008, counting all the local and regional events, the world contained at least 4,000 festivals. France alone held 350 a year, and North America had more than 1,500.

This explosive growth turned the festival scene into a global distribution system, one rivaling Hollywood's in quantity and reach. Although the circuit was relatively decentralized, it became powerful. The Cannes festival became a worldwide media event, and Sundance constituted a brand itself, spun off into merchandise, a cable channel, and a chain of theaters. As Hollywood tightened its grip on international distribution, more specialized films depended on festival screenings to reach audiences, build support among critics, and find overseas sales. Smaller distributors selected their films from festival programs, as did companies needing material for television, home video, and streaming services.

Festivals and the Global Film Business

The thousands of festivals give communities a chance to see films that their local commercial theaters would never screen. Asian cinema came to the world's notice in the 1990s thanks largely to energetic programmers at Locarno, Rotterdam, Toronto, and Vancouver. Most gay and lesbian films, feminist cinema, and films from ethnic minorities would go unseen if not for the festival circuit. Here again, a festival show serves as a "first run" venue before the film moves to video. Some festivals have maintained their audiences by scheduling year-round programming.

Presence in a festival also allows national cultures to present themselves in a good light. Westerners' attitudes toward Iran were softened by the humanistic films (see Iran: Revolution, Renaissance, and Retreat p. 589) that took so many prizes on the festival circuit. Likewise, most governments denied Taiwan diplomatic recognition, and so its films would have been unseen abroad had not festivals made them available. Thanks to Cannes and Venice, Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang (see Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-Hsien p. 619) found international funding and distribution. Indeed, the films of some major directors were better known in festivals than in their home countries.

The dozen or so "A-list" festivals are crucially important in marketing movies made outside Hollywood. If critics speak favorably of the film, or if it wins a prize, it can get special attention. For films made with subsidies from national governments, earning a slot in a prestigious festival confirms the funding agency's decision to support the project. If a film already has been sold for distribution, a festival screening may launch it for the region.

A-list festivals provide a promising point of sale for finished films. At Cannes, alongside invited festival screenings, a market allows hundreds of companies to show films to potential distributors. Since 1970, the Berlin festival's European Film Market has become the central meeting place for the German industry. During the 2000s, festivals created forums bringing together investors with filmmakers who had works in progress to pitch.

More and more festivals began funding films themselves. Rotterdam's Tigers and Dragons Award supported young Asian cinema, while Sundance offered a prize to turn a promising script into a film. (One prominent winner was *Central Station*, see Brazil p. 595.) Most ambitious was Berlin's World Cinema Fund, launched in 2004 with a budget of half a million euros. It aimed to support filmmaking in areas fraught with political or economic crises, and to encourage German producers to get into the international market. Twelve years later, it had provided production or distribution money for more than a hundred projects from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. The Venice festival launched a competitive program that funded first-time projects by beginning filmmakers.

Programmers and critics were key players in the system, but sales agents took on major roles as well. A producer would sign with a sales agent to represent a film to foreign buyers, and a few exceptionally strong agencies emerged in the 1990s, such as Wild Bunch and Celluloid Dreams in Paris, and Fortissimo Films, based in Amsterdam and Hong Kong. Filmmakers gravitated to these firms because of their power in the marketplace and their willingness to support unusual fare. Wild Bunch engineered the surprising success of the silent, black-and-white film *The Artist* (2011) by persuading Harvey Weinstein to buy the film for US distribution. Wild Bunch then persuaded the Cannes programmers to screen it in competition, where it won a top prize. *The Artist* earned five Academy Awards and eventually grossed $133 million worldwide, on a $15 million budget.

Festivals could not stand apart from changes in the wider industry, however. The popularity of Hollywood films put pressure on the A-list festivals to showcase new releases. Accordingly, Cannes, Venice, and Toronto provided red-carpet premieres and heavy press coverage to *Up* (2009), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), *The Green Book* (2018), and many other mainstream films. The major companies used festival screenings to build international buzz. The prestige of *Joker* (2019) was raised considerably when it won the top prize at Venice.

As streaming platforms Netflix and Amazon ventured into production and signed up major directors, festivals had to decide whether to admit films that would have little or no theatrical distribution. Cannes, responding to legislation and a militant exhibition sector, blocked streaming companies from access to competition slots. Venice, Toronto, and other festivals welcomed the streamers' output. Filmmakers were happy to cooperate because they wanted their work shown on big screens before migrating to home viewing. Again, festivals were serving as "first-run" venues.

In addition, the rise of the TimesUp and #MeToo movements in the media sector encouraged festivals to reflect on gender diversity. Some journalists and festival directors argued that 50 percent of the program should consist of films by women directors. It was likely that the debate about how to achieve fairness would continue for some time.

Despite problems, as a parallel distribution system, festivals served as a filtering mechanism. The film festival, large or small, became the chief mechanism for choosing, from all the thousands of films made outside Hollywood, those that might find global audiences.

VIDEO PIRACY: AN ALTERNATIVE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

By the mid-1980s, about 130 million videocassette recorders were in use around the world. Video became to film what audiotape and CDs were to music: a dramatically new phase in the globalization of entertainment. With video, however, came piracy on a scale never seen before. Illegal copies of popular titles emerged on the black market. Cooperative projectionists and laboratory workers could smuggle out prints of newly released films for duplication.

Piracy was everywhere, spreading out from copying centers in Italy, Turkey, Taiwan, Russia, and New York. Illegal copies constituted one-quarter to one-half of the video sales in Europe, and up to 90 percent of those in China, India, and South America. People were snagging movies from theater screens with video cameras and cellphones. Throughout Asia, dupe copies were shown in "video parlors," where the ticket price allowed friends to gather in small rooms with drinks and snacks. In India, pirated films filled cable channels, themselves often outlaw operations. A Hong Kong film producer remarked: "Piracy is the best distribution system."

With digital reproduction, piracy went into overdrive. In East Asia and Africa, the Video CD (VCD), a digital format using low-level compression, began to replace tape in the mid-1990s. Illegal discs were cheaper to make and transport than videotapes. Working from cable broadcasts, legal tapes, or laserdiscs, factories in Mainland China stamped out thousands of VCDs a day and shipped them all over Asia, to sell at one to two dollars each.

The higher-quality imagery offered by DVDs proved even more attractive, and the discs were easy to copy. Although the US studios coded DVDs by regions of the world, the codes were quickly broken and region-free players went on sale. According to estimates, pirated copies constituted more than half of the DVDs sold in Mexico

and more than 90 percent of those sold in China. The ultimate buccaneering frontier was the Internet, where thousands of movies were available for free. Swift file-sharing programs such as BitTorrent made downloading easy, and peer-to-peer alliances proved difficult to track. A Swedish site defiantly named itself Pirate Bay.

The World Trade Organization (WTO), one of the most powerful agents of globalization, required that all member countries pledge to protect intellectual property. Yet most governments were slow to attack bootleggers. Insisting that piracy stole at least $6 billion from its bottom line, the Motion Picture Association of America began pressuring China, Russia, and other offenders. The MPAA launched an international campaign urging consumers not to be "movie thieves." Ironically, when excellent copies popped up on the Internet before a film's theatrical release, the source was likely to be someone working in the US industry.

Studios pushed for higher-definition DVD formats, not just because of quality but because the codes for Blu-ray and HD discs were supposedly invulnerable. Hackers easily cracked them. One musician sang the HD code (to guitar accompaniment) and posted his performance on YouTube. After Blu-ray won the format wars, studios continued to try to make the discs copy-proof. Yet dedicated hackers overcame all obstacles. In 2017, pirates began threatening to circulate unreleased films and TV shows online unless ransom was paid. Illegally accessing and distributing films had become a permanent part of the global media landscape.

FAN SUBCULTURES: APPROPRIATING THE MOVIES

Since the 1910s, films—particularly US films—won international fans. Around the world, magazines and newspapers catered to moviegoers' fascination with stars and directors. Books and magazines targeted cults devoted to Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Bruce Lee, and other charismatic figures. *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, first published in 1958, fed the love of classic horror. The science-fiction and fantasy boom of the 1970s triggered a burst of publishing, with periodicals such as *Cinefantastique*, *Fangoria*, and many magazines devoted to *Star Wars*. Fans of science fiction, fantasy, and animation gathered in annual conventions to swap and sell memorabilia.

With the arrival of the Internet, fandom changed dramatically. Isolated and diverse fans became a community, interacting with one another on a planetary scale. Home video also changed fan culture. Before videotape, fans were forced to hunt down the films they loved in cinemas and late-night television broadcasts. Now, a fan could own copies of beloved titles and, equipped with two VCRs, copy tapes obtained from other fans. A legion of fans grew, dedicated to swapping and discussing their favorites. When DVDs arrived, fans could crack encryption codes and clone whatever they wanted. Small companies circulated hard-to-find titles, often in defiance of copyright laws.

As rare movies flashed across national borders via cable, satellite, and home video, fans' tastes diversified. During the 1960s and 1970s, marginal film industries had exported cheap, sometimes wild, genre films—women-in-prison movies from the Philippines, Mexican masked-wrestler dramas, and Turkish vampire films. Discovered on video, these "mondo" movies seemed cool to many young people looking for thrills beyond Hollywood. Kung-fu sagas, Bollywood musicals, and Japanese animation found niches in mainstream youth culture thanks largely to the fans who tirelessly circulated video copies in the 1980s and 1990s.

Whatever their preferences, fans found their voice in fanzines. These photocopied cut-and-paste magazines were labors of love, distributed through the mail and the increasingly popular fan conventions. Cult films such as *Blade Runner* and *Blue Velvet* were common 'zine subjects. By the mid-1990s, the Internet largely replaced fanzines. Fans could build websites as shrines to their favorites, and chatrooms let fans swap opinions and video copies. Yahoo and Livejournal hosted fan discussions, and from 2007 on, Tumblr became home to millions of fan-driven microblogs.

Fan communities have been called "participatory cultures" because their members rework the media texts they love.[8] Offered the chance, fans would spin the original movie or TV show in new directions—clipping out scenes to make highlights videos, writing poems and songs about favorite characters, and circulating new stories about them. The fan frenzy around *Star Wars* convinced film companies that if they did not form authorized fan clubs and crack down on the dozens of 'zines in circulation, they were forfeiting rights to their intellectual property.

The Internet only increased the risk, as fans would not hesitate to recycle anything. After music fans had devised mashups that merged two songs, film fans followed with video mashups that plundered DVDs and online trailers for clips and soundtracks, then mixed them in mocking ways. "Brokeback to the Future" (2006) infuses the McFly saga with a gay sensibility; in "A Hard Day's Night of the Living Dead" (2006) the Beatles flee zombies. Parodies, tributes, and fan reenactments shamelessly exploited Hollywood brands. Copyright and intellectual-property law were openly flouted. Yet the fans were the most loyal sector of the audience, and the studios dared not alienate

them. As a result, the Majors constantly oscillated between wooing the fans and threatening them if they were judged to go too far.

The Fans and the Suits Fans were clearly the core audience for blockbusters, and the industry lured them with treats: movie websites offered trailers, screensavers, puzzles, games, and prizes. The studios also moved onto the fans' home ground. Comic-Con, which was held every July in San Diego, began as a convention for comic book collectors. Over time, it became the most important gathering of popular culture aficionados in the world, with attendance of more than 130,000. At Comic-Con, fans perused displays of the latest video games and franchise products, and watched previews of films and TV shows. Filmmakers were anxious to drive buzz, and "Marvel vs. DC" face-offs developed as studios promoted their rival franchises.

Filmmakers realized that they could engage fans more deeply through what one media historian called *transmedia storytelling*: the continuing of characters or story lines on many platforms.[9] This is a very old phenomenon, as when ancient myths and religious tales were passed along in song, pictures, plays, and written language. But for film, it is fairly recent. Franchises moved away from simply recounting a series of adventures of a single character, as in the James Bond films, and began to create a fictional world filled with many characters and territories. Stories from that world could be split up for different platforms, from comic books to video games.

For most of these franchises, the films established the canon, and the other media fleshed that out. George Lucas was a pioneer in transmedia storytelling, making sure that *Star Wars* novels, comic books, and animated series were fitted into the gaps in the screen saga. A 2019 *Star Wars* comic book expanded the final scenes of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) by revealing Luke Skywalker's reaction when he learns who his father is.

In 2011, J. K. Rowling set up her Pottermore website, inviting fans to enjoy new stories and examine particular objects, creatures, and spells in Harry Potter's world. The owners of the franchises hoped that fresh backstories and "sidestories" like these would not only add profitable entries to the saga but would also sustain brand loyalty. As fans grew up and created families, further installments in the franchise would bring new generations into the transmedia world.

To secure brand loyalty, filmmakers highlighted moments of "fan service" that tapped into knowledge of the franchise. *Skyfall* (2012) aimed to please followers of the Bond films by bringing back the hero's iconic Aston Martin automobile. Every Marvel film included a cameo appearance of legendary comics creator Stan Lee. The "binary sunset" shot in *Star Wars IX: The Rise of Skywalker* (2019) replicated a similar shot from the first entry in the series more than forty years earlier.

Fan response was shaping entire franchises. Marvel Studios leader Kevin Feige, himself a fan since childhood, brought the comic-book universe to the screen by filling the films with interwoven storylines and cross-references. These would stir viewers to rewatch earlier entries and speculate endlessly online about what might happen in upcoming installments. He was also responsive to viewers' demands for a female *Captain Marvel* (2019) and a protagonist of color in *Black Panther* (2018).

Occasionally fans were brought more directly into the creative process. New Line's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003), designed as a global film, became a fan fetish as soon as it was announced. Chatrooms buzzed about the best casting, aware that director Peter Jackson's team was monitoring them; the discussions may have shaped the final decision, as fan favorite Cate Blanchett was awarded a crucial role. Many fans believed that their objections to changing the original novel encouraged Jackson to shoot a more faithful version. One New Zealand devotee trekked to filming locations to post reports on TheOneRing.net. New Line saw her as a spy, but Jackson invited her to visit the set. In the meantime, New Line allowed one actor, Ian McKellen, to post a diary about the production on his website. Just as cleverly, the first trailer for the film was released online before it was seen in theaters, and it drew more than 1.6 million hits on its first day.

Fans vs. Suits With greater fan power came greater friction. In 2019, a trailer for a film featuring video game star Sonic the Hedgehog aroused fans to fury. The character design earned hundreds of thousands of "dislike" ratings, so Sonic was redesigned. A new trailer was far more favorably received. The fans' objections were said to have cost five months of production time.

Social media would pass judgment on any attempt to refresh a revered story world. The final *Star Wars* trilogy (2015–2019) made its primary protagonist a woman and gave people of color prominent roles. Thousands of fans hurled online insults at the actors. While the Disney company anticipated criticism for centering the plot on Rey, it also sought to muffle male fans' objections. "We didn't want her necessarily to be a very feminine character," remarked the costume designer, "—or a very masculine one."[10] As it turned out, the moment when Rey revealed her double-bladed lightsaber became a rousing piece of fan service, and she became a popular cosplay figure for fans of all genders.

In their dedication, fans sought to subvert studio plans, even in defiance of copyright laws. George Lucas

29.8, 29.9 *Raiders of the Lost Ark: The Adaptation* was made by Mississippi teenagers Eric Zala, Chris Strompolos, and Rayson Lamb. (Here the original widescreen frame of *Raiders* has been cropped to approximate what the young filmmakers would have seen on a VHS tape.)

rereleased the first *Star Wars* installment in revised versions and withdrew the original. In response, fans searched out 16 mm prints of the original and posted them online. Fans' "special editions" popped up, with alternate cuts, CGI, color adjustments, and high definition upgrades. One clandestine team spent years digitally cleaning up a 35 mm Spanish print of the original before posting their version on the Internet. In early decades, collectors had preserved silent films that studios and archives had failed to store. Now fans could argue that making available their beloved classic was not only a token of respect but a contribution to documenting film history.

Fans went further and obsessively remade their favorites. In 1982, three young boys in Mississippi began creating a shot-by-shot VHS remake of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (**29.8**, **29.9**). It took them seven years, with the result that the actors grow older or younger from scene to scene. Similar was the crowd-sourced fan movie *Star Wars Uncut* (2010). Casey Pugh created a website allowing fans to sign up for remaking, in any way they chose, fifteen-second segments of the first entry in the franchise. He then strung all 473 offerings together in synchronization with the original soundtrack. The segments were in enormously varied styles, including fan performance, surreal imagery, and a range of animation techniques (**Color Plate 29.3**).

Hollywood's massive entertainment economy, which encouraged many niche tastes, had made it cool to be a fan. J. K. Rowling books were embraced by adults, and Spider-Man action figures could be found in yuppie apartments. "We won," remarked Patton Oswalt. "Nerd-dom is now mainstream. Which means that everything is ruined."[11] Old-school fans spent years in passionate dedication, searching out rare 'zines and bad VHS dubs. To Oswalt's regret, the Internet allowed any bit of pop culture to be instantly absorbed and discarded, with no time to marinate in obsessive love. In going global, geek culture was losing its edgy identity.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, cinema was playing a key role in globalization. Hollywood's power was tightening, thanks to the reach of conglomerates and the success of the multiplexing strategy. At the same time, regional film alliances competed vigorously for audiences. Emigrants and exiles were translating their experiences into films that could not have been made by people who lived in a single country. The number of festivals showing all varieties of films increased steeply. Thanks to cable, home video, and the Internet, viewers outside major cities were seeing films that would never have played local theaters. Fan subcultures were promoting not only official classics but also movies that were far from Hollywood's idea of the global blockbuster. As the number of screens, both public and personal, grew, people from very different societies were sharing their passion for films of all sorts.

In the 2010s, however, forces working against globalization gathered strength. Major countries moved to restrict immigration, withdraw from trade agreements, and restrict capital investments in other regions. Populist movements in the United States and Europe began declaring that each nation should be economically self-sufficient and culturally homogenous. The 2020 coronavirus pandemic heightened all these divisions. Some observers even predicted that the European Union would dissolve. It was unclear how cinema, born as an international art and business, could continue to take its place in a shared global culture.

REFERENCES

1. *Variety* (February 13–19, 1995): 1.
2. Quoted in Patrick Brzeski, "Wang Jianlin: The Chairman Will See You Now," *The Hollywood Reporter* (November 11, 2016), p. 65.
3. Quoted in Stig Björkman, "Preface," in Lars von Trier, *Breaking the Waves* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), p. 8.
4. The Dogme 95 manifesto can be found at www.dogme95.dk.
5. Quoted in Romaine Johais, "Zydogmatique," *Cinéastes* 1 (October–December 2000): 32.
6. Lawrie Zion, "She Shoots, She Scores," *Hollywood Reporter* (August 13–19, 2002): 14.
7. Pico Iyer, *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home* (New York: Knopf, 2000), p. 93.
8. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
9. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 93–130.
10. Michael Kaplan, quoted in "Everybody Loves Rey, A *Star Wars* Story," *Wired* (November 2019): 74.
11. Patton Oswalt, "Wake Up, Geek Culture. Time to Die," *Wired* (January 2011), 98.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On Hollywood studios' relation to fandoms: "Snakes, no. Borat, yes. Not all internet publicity is the same"

On piracy: "Creating a classic, with a little help from your pirate friends"

On fan culture in the 1910s: "Memory books, the movies, and aspiring vamps"

On fan culture and the studios: "Jack and the bean-counters," "Comic-Con: The end of an era and other highlights," and "Rowling's revelations: Who wants to know"

The Shallows

CHAPTER 30

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE CINEMA

Enter the Matrix videogame

In May 1999, George Lucas's *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* began its American run in nearly 3,000 theaters. Four screens, in New Jersey and California, tested prototypes of digital projectors. Other "films without film" soon followed, playing in a handful of theaters. Journalists declared that within a few years, digital would be the norm for exhibition.

Digital technology entered production as well. As early as 1997, Lucas predicted: "Film is a very unique thing, but it is going to go out of use. And you have to accept that this change is going to happen."[1] Lucas shot the second *Star Wars* episode, *Attack of the Clones* (2002), with a new high-definition camera. Robert Rodriguez did the same for *Spy Kids 2: The Island of Lost Dreams* (2002) and *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* (2003). Both directors declared that they would never shoot on film again. Many professionals dreaded the death of photographic film, but Lucas considered the change unstoppable.

Digital distribution seemed harder to achieve than either production or exhibition. To circulate movies, didn't you need physical media—film reels or VHS tapes or DVDs? Even the screens running *The Phantom Menace* relied on hard drives. But some executives dreamed of sending movies to theaters via satellite or fiber-optic cables. And if films could be distributed to multiplexes digitally, could they not be delivered for home viewing that way too?

"Digital convergence" was the prospect that anything in any medium could be coded, manipulated, distributed, and displayed in a digital format. The process was transforming publishing, television, and music. Eventually film, which Lucas called the last nineteenth-century technology, caught up. Between 1995 and 2015, the cinema lost its tie to a physical medium. No longer stored and displayed on strips of plastic coiled around reels, most movies were encoded as strings of ones and zeroes.

Within the film world, there was a sort of convergence as well. The three major wings of the industry—production, distribution, and

exhibition—moved toward digital platforms. It took about twenty years for all the phases to be synchronized, so that a film shot digitally could be distributed and shown in that format. The change depended on the growth of more powerful computers, more sophisticated programs, and greater bandwidth on the Internet. Like many changes, it seemed sudden, but behind the scenes it was gradual and unsteady.

Over the same period, digital convergence grew beyond the film industry. The rise of "new media" brought film into a mixture with music, homemade videos, and video games. Crucial to this integration was the Internet. The Internet easily allowed films, games, music, photos, and text to be grabbed, combined, manipulated, and shared. The first website appeared in 1991, and the Internet became widely available in 1993. By 1997, it was starting to become the enormous array of sites and applications it is today.

The convergence guaranteed a constant technological churn, the rapid replacement of one application or operating system by another. Napster gave way to iTunes and Spotify, MySpace to Facebook and Instagram. Cell phones became smartphones—pocket computers that could take photos and videos, send messages, and provide endless entertainment. Google, Amazon, Apple, and other big players grew tremendously powerful, absorbing popular web services such as YouTube and expanding their reach to the entire earth. People began to live "always-online" lives, tethered at every minute to their social network and the web universe. As globalization was pulling film cultures together, filmmakers also had to adjust to the perpetual turmoil of the digital age.

DIGITAL TOOLS: PIECE BY PIECE

Even before Lucas lobbied for digital convergence, he and other filmmakers had brought computer technology into the filmmaking process. The earliest instance involved *motion-control systems*, computer-governed cameras that could repeat, frame by frame, movements over miniatures or models. Pioneered on *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and other projects, motion control was extensively used in *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* (1977), and the process quickly became vital to making special-effects shots more three-dimensional.

Sound recording and reproduction became digital as well. Digital audio tape (DAT) emerged as the audio engineer's standard for both music and film sound. While digital sound was becoming normal for film production in the mid-1980s, it spread to the consumer market through the audio compact disc (CD). Then multiplexes upgraded to digital multichannel systems, encouraging filmmakers to use evocative surround effects and greater dynamic ranges.

In the 1980s and 1990s, digital technology slipped into film production gradually, in piecemeal ways. Not until the 2000s were there efforts toward a complete, integrated workflow.

Preproduction

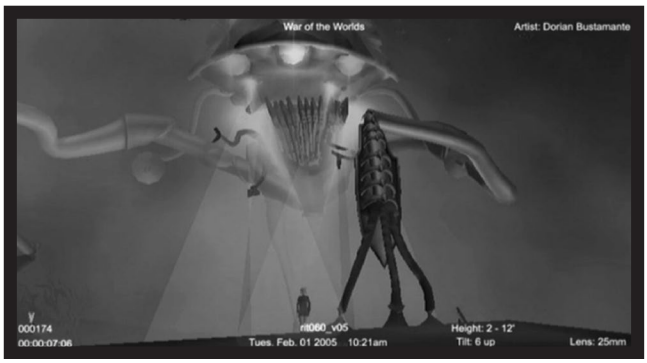
Fairly early, computers assisted the paperwork tasks of scriptwriting and budgeting. More significant were the changes in production design and previsualization.

Designers had long done their work using drawings and scale models. As architectural and drawing software became more user-friendly, designers gained greater precision by creating 3D virtual sets. The choreography for the Oompa Loompa dances in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005) was devised in virtual sets. Another program allowed designs to be fitted onto real terrain via Google Earth.

Previsualization can mean any sort of image planning, such as sketches or blueprints, but it came to refer to preparing a simple, digitally animated version of a sequence or film. "Previs" grew out of the practice of making *animatics*, which were a tool for cel animation. The storyboard images would be filmed and edited to a prerecorded soundtrack. Filmmakers could determine the length of shots and the editing before embarking on the costly animation process.

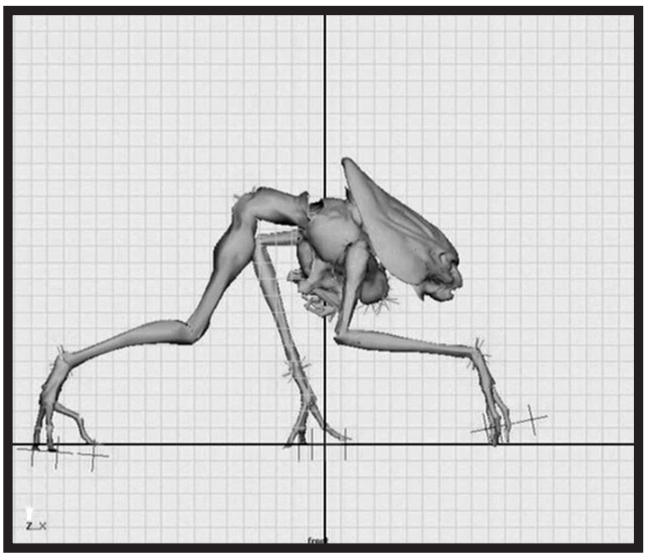
During the mid-1990s, previs techniques employed blocky figures and sketchy sets that would take relatively little time or computer memory to create. Previs was expensive, and it was used primarily to plan special-effects sequences. Soon some filmmakers realized that big-budget films warranted complete previs versions. A previs contained far more information than a storyboard. Directors and cinematographers could plan camera set-ups, lenses, lighting, and staging; actors on a bare stage could see settings or monsters that would be added as FX (**30.1**). FX teams could get a head start on their work.

Again Lucas was a pioneer. *The Phantom Menace* was entirely planned in previs. The sequences were so fully mapped out that the editor simply waited for each day's footage and fitted shots into place in the previs version. Lucas shared his methods with two directors. After a tour of Skywalker Ranch, Peter Jackson established a previs department, linked to both the art department and his FX house, Weta Digital (see Peter Jackson and the Aftermath of *The Lord of the Rings* p. 613), to create complete previs versions of *The Lord of the Rings* (2001–2003) and *King Kong* (2005). Later Lucas convinced Steven Spielberg, notoriously shy of digital technology, to adopt previs for *War of the Worlds* (2005).



Filming of The War of the Worlds

30.1 Steven Spielberg showed this previs image to the actors so that they would know what they were supposed to be reacting to in *War of the Worlds*.



Filming of The War of the Worlds

30.2 An unrendered movement test for the aliens in *War of the Worlds*.

Previs software was an early indication of convergence among digital media. The underwater sets in *The Abyss* (1989) were previsualized using a virtual-reality engine from a video game. That engine became Virtus WalkThrough Pro, a major previs program. Antics, another program based on video-game technology, was released in 2005. Such programs proliferated and put previs within reach of independent filmmakers.

Postproduction

Digital tools became dominant in the phase following principal photography. Editing, color manipulation, special effects, and sound design all became quicker and more flexible with the aid of computer programs and data storage.

With a 35 mm image, *color grading* was traditionally used to even out the look of shots made in different lighting conditions. Grading was done in the laboratory, using tests, filters, exposure time, and lamp temperature. The use of *digital intermediates* (DIs) made the process quicker and offered a great range of choice to filmmakers. Digital scanning had been used for many years to transfer film to video via a telecine machine. With greater computing power, it was possible to scan a film into digital files, manipulate its color and other visual qualities, and then scan the resulting images back onto a new film negative.

At first, making digital intermediates was expensive and took many seconds per frame. Typically only commercials, with their short running times and high budgets, employed DIs. By the late 1990s, new machines could scan more quickly to create high-definition video images, and DIs began to be used occasionally in film postproduction.

Pleasantville (1998) was the first feature to use a DI for color manipulation. The story demanded it: the teenage protagonists magically enter a black-and-white TV world but retain their color; gradually other characters and objects gain color. The film was shot in color, and for about 1,700 shots, selective digital grading changed parts of the frame to black and white, while other parts retained their color. Here the manipulation was a special fantasy effect, but for *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), the entire film was scanned in order to change lush green landscapes to a dusty brown that reflected the plot's Depression setting (**Color Plates 30.1**, **30.2**).

For *The Lord of the Rings*, a new system was devised that allowed the digital colorist to precisely target areas of a shot to be changed. In early 2002, the new program went on the market as 5D Colossus (later renamed "lustre"). It quickly became one of the most popular postproduction tools. By late 2003, DIs were becoming routine, and soon costs were low enough to allow independent and arthouse films around the world to utilize them.

Although DI-based color grading became common, the technique passed unnoticed by most spectators. To audiences, the obvious change that digital technology brought to films was *computer-generated imagery* (CGI). The technology was slow to develop. In 1982, Disney released *TRON*, the first feature with significant amounts of CGI (**Color Plate 30.3**), but its failure discouraged the studio from pursuing such an expensive approach.

At first, CGI work was laborious and required vast amounts of computing power. Early programs also lacked sophisticated methods for *rendering*, which involves the addition of surface texture, color, and lighting (**30.2**). The animation of living creatures was a particular challenge. Then the division of Lucasfilm that later became Pixar

developed RenderMan, a program that would revolutionize CGI. RenderMan, first used to animate a stained-glass figure in *Young Sherlock Holmes* (1985), was improved in creating underwater aliens for *The Abyss* and a liquid-metal villain who could morph into a lifelike human in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991; see Color Plate 28.9). Pixar regularly upgraded RenderMan to deal with complex surfaces like fur (**Color Plate 30.4**), cloth, reflections, and grass. Other studios sought to capture the elusive qualities of human skin and eyes.

In 1993, *Jurassic Park* revolutionized CGI with the realistic movement and skin of its dinosaurs (29.1). FX-heavy films proliferated. Some CGI was spectacular, creating fantasy worlds, like that in *The Fifth Element* (1997; see Color Plate 29.1). Other uses were more mundane, such as adding a sign on a building or erasing the wires used to secure actors during martial-arts fights (see Color Plate 29.2). The release of the Maya animation program in 1998 added enormous control over factors such as gravity, weather, and muscle movement. Maya was versatile, being compatible with most other programs and even with smaller proprietary ones devised for individual films. Maya became an industry standard alongside RenderMan and lustre.

The Phantom Menace was the first live-action feature to contain a human-like character, but audiences' dislike of Jar Jar Binks overshadowed the accomplishment. Combining innovative motion capture and new methods of rendering, *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* was hailed for its depiction of Gollum, which simulated the translucent look of skin and the glint of human eyes (**Color Plate 30.5**).

With the success of blockbusters and the increasing sophistication of CGI, films included ever-larger numbers of special effects. *Jurassic Park* had about fifty special-effects shots. *Superman Returns* (2006) had 1,416. Although some techniques became cheaper, the rise in the number and complexity of FX shots drove up film budgets. CGI could consume half the cost of a movie.

Other postproduction tasks were made easier and faster through digital technology. Originally, editing a film's shots into their final order required making a positive work print of the footage and splicing it in the desired order. For the final cut, a duplicate of the original camera negative was then carefully cut and assembled to match.

In the mid-1980s, several companies developed *nonlinear editing* tools, which substitute a video copy of a film for the work print. Editors could quickly access any desired shot and could try out alternative versions without physically cutting footage. Lucasfilm put EditDroid on the market in 1984, but its high cost, combined with many filmmakers' reluctance to switch to the unfamiliar technology, limited sales. In 1994, the underlying technology was sold to Avid. At about the same time, another system, Lightworks, was introduced.

Avid and Lightworks convinced Hollywood filmmakers to switch to nonlinear editing. In 1999, Apple released Final Cut Pro, a cheap and user-friendly program that allowed editors to work on desktops and laptops. Final Cut Pro was first used for a Hollywood feature on *The Rules of Attraction* (2002), and it became widely adopted. Over the same period, advances in sound technology streamlined the editing and mixing of tracks. By 2005, most postproduction activities were executed in the digital domain.

Shooting in Digital: Experiments on the Margins

Filming with digital cameras began in the television industry but was slow to enter theatrical filmmaking. Digital images were adequate for television transmission, but they looked faint and fuzzy when projected on a theater screen. During the 1990s and early 2000s, standard definition and then high definition (HD) cameras improved video quality dramatically. They were embraced by independent and DIY filmmakers, but seldom by mainstream Hollywood.

In 1995, Sony set the standard for prosumer cameras, offering a digital video camcorder with a new level of resolution. The camera was also far cheaper than professional film cameras. Because it recorded sound and image at the same time, with a microphone positioned above the lens, a filmmaker could work on location without any assistance. Equally crucial was the Sony camera's capacity to transfer video information into either a PC or Mac computer. A few programs were already available that let individual filmmakers to do all postproduction tasks digitally.

Non-studio filmmakers soon experimented with digital. The first film from the Danish Dogme 95 movement (see Back to Basics: Dogme 95 p. 687), *The Celebration* (1998), was shot on digital and successfully released on 35 mm. It inspired indie Miguel Arteta to make *Chuck and Buck* (2000), one of the earliest digital films to be transferred to 35 mm and shown in US theaters. An American film adhering to the Dogme 95 rules, Harmony Korine's *julien donkey-boy* (1999), manipulated its low-resolution digital footage for release on 35 mm. In 2000, Mike Figgis made *Timecode* (**30.3**), which splits the frame among four continuous takes, following loosely related stories. Richard Linklater, who moved between arthouse indie and mainstream projects, used digital technology to develop a distinctive form of animation. For *Waking Life* (2001), Linklater shot live-action footage on prosumer digital cameras and turned the footage over to a team of animators to recast using 2D computer animation (**Color Plate 30.6**). Linklater used similar techniques on *A Scanner Darkly* (2006).

Timecode

30.3 "Video has arrived," says the woman in the lower left frame, "and is demanding new expressions, new sensations" (*Timecode*).

Cloverfield

30.4 *Cloverfield*: Views from a consumer digital camera were imitated using far more advanced equipment.

Eventually, other independent American directors moved to digital. David Lynch, who had been making short films on standard-definition video for his website, used it for *Inland Empire* (2006). He declared: "For me, there's no way back to film. I'm done with it. I love abstraction. Film is a beautiful medium, but it's very slow and you don't get a chance to try a lot of different things. With DV, you get those chances. And in postproduction, if you can think it, you can do it."[2] Robert Altman shot his last film, *A Prairie Home Companion* (2006) on HD, mainly because hiring three cameras at a low cost allowed him to record onstage musical numbers. The "found-footage" *Cloverfield* (2008) mixed high-end digital cameras with a prosumer one, which simulated footage shot by the characters (**30.4**).

Low-budget filmmakers around the world were abandoning photochemical film. Digital media allowed filmmakers in countries without significant film industries to expand production, as Nigerians did in making their features on prosumer cameras (see Improbable Rise of Nollywood p. 584). Because digital tape and drives were cheaper than film, and could be reused, documentarists could now shoot much more footage of an event or interview. Experimental filmmakers created gallery installations that ran for hours (see Movies in Museums p. 541). For *10* (2004), Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami fastened a camera to a car's dashboard and built his film around lengthy takes of passengers' conversations.

Filmmakers who formerly would have used 8 mm or 16 mm film turned to digital media. One festival, the "48 Hour Film Project," could only have emerged in the digital era. It challenged amateurs to make a short film in two days, with the results screened immediately.

Digital Tools for 35 mm Shooting

Even though most directors favored shooting on 35 mm, some digital tools made their way into principal photography.

Video assist displayed shots as they were being made. A chip inside the 35 mm camera's viewfinder relayed the image to monitors. A small monitor mounted on the camera aided the director of photography's assistants, while larger displays could be watched and reviewed by the director and other crew members.

Because CGI became so common, filmmakers created footage with an eye toward digital manipulation later. When settings, background action, or additional figures needed to be added, actors performed in front of blue or green screens.

Motion capture was also executed at the shooting stage. In this process, performers with dots attached to their bodies were captured by digital cameras (**30.5**). The dots became key control points in building a digital figure. The techniques for motion capture became more refined. For *Avatar* (2009), tiny cameras were suspended in front of actors' faces to record the nuances of their expressions. James Cameron called this now-common technique "performance capture," which has become another term for motion capture. Combined with motion control, which could record and replay camera movements, performance capture seamlessly inserted actors' movements into computer-generated surroundings.

The growing use of CGI and motion capture accustomed filmmakers to digital work methods and made them more open to fully digital production in the years to come.

Collection Christophel/Alamy Stock Photo

30.5 Motion capture in *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011): Large dots are control points for the actor's body, while the small camera captures tiny dots registering facial expressions.

Publicity and Marketing

Until the 1990s, movie press kits were packets of printed credits, plot synopses, and publicity photos for reporters and reviewers. Then studio publicity departments began mailing the same material on computer floppy disks. By the beginning of the 2000s, electronic press kits (EPKs) on CD-ROM or DVD had become common. EPKs contained downloadable photos, clips, and interviews geared to radio and TV coverage. Later, both studio and independent productions posted EPK material on websites.

Marketers were slow to offer audiences websites devoted to specific films. In 1998, the makers of a DIY feature, *The Blair Witch Project*, launched a site. It purported to contain documents about an actual case of witchcraft and murder, investigated by filmmakers who had mysteriously disappeared. The intriguing website helped the film to stupendous success.

Marketers established official websites, while also enlisting fans to publicize the film. Around 2001, companies embraced "viral marketing," sending press releases and even bits of exclusive news to a few trusted fan sites and letting links spread the information through cyberspace. The head of Marvel Studios remarked: "I used to hate the Internet. I thought it was just a place where people stole our products. But I see how influential these fans can be when they build a consensus, which is what we seek. I now consider them filmmaking partners."[3]

Films' official websites became more entertaining and participatory. In June 2001, a few weeks before the premiere of *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, the studio invited moviegoers to follow clues over thirty interlinked websites. By 2007, the studios were posting intriguing interactive features. *The Dark Knight* (2008) teased fans with sites containing games, coded messages, and invitations to join the Joker's gang.

Internet sites were far cheaper than TV or print ads, and independent filmmakers created their own. In 2002, Steven Soderbergh devised a website for his low-budget digital film, *Full Frontal*. It was an early instance of a director and his crew posting regular production diaries, a tactic that became common for major studio productions. For economy, this behind-the-scenes material could be reused in the special features of DVD releases.

With the spread of social media, films at every level, from blockbusters to DIY projects, had their own Facebook and Twitter pages, where producers could encourage fans to publicize their titles with shares and retweets. Peter Jackson posted episodes of a video diary covering the making of *King Kong* (2005) on Facebook rather than on the film's official website; a selection of these was released as a two-DVD set on the day before the film debuted, generating both publicity and extra income. Jackson later posted similar video-diary entries for three years (2011–2013) during the production of the *Hobbit* trilogy.

By the mid-2000s, digital technology had entered, piecemeal, every phase of the filmmaking process, from script and set design to postproduction and marketing. Yet nearly all releases were still made and screened on 35 mm photographic film. That situation was about to change.

DIGITAL CONVERGENCE: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The crucial change came with the standardization of high-grade digital video as both a capture medium and an exhibition format. Just as 35 mm film was a common platform for production, distribution, and exhibition, a digital standard could integrate all phases of a film's life.

As with the invention of synchronized-sound filmmaking, the innovation owed a lot to inventors and companies around the world. But global digital convergence was engineered by the American film industry and its prime players.

The Digital Cinema Initiative

Hollywood executives were worried about several aspects of 35 mm film. Producing a film was expensive enough, but the total international cost of making prints and shipping them to theaters was about $5 billion. Digital methods of circulation could reduce that by as much as 90 percent.

Moreover, after a few days of projection, a print was often scratching and torn, so another print would have to be supplied to the theater. A digital version of a film could be copied at almost no cost, and it would look the same over hundreds of screenings. A digital film could also be easily dubbed or subtitled by simply adding a file. It would also be cheaper to ship on a disc or hard drive than on heavy 35 mm reels.

But to shift to a digital platform risked expanding piracy. Executives stared in horror as cheap clones of legal DVDs were sold in street markets around the world. Would pirates not somehow get their hands on a digital film and be selling copies on disc or online before it even opened? Any digital movie would have to be massively encrypted.

Still, the cost savings were tempting. To explore the options, the Majors in 2002 established the Digital Cinema Initiative (DCI). This consortium set out to plan a consistent standard for digital projection. The DCI group consisted of engineers, theater owners, equipment manufacturers, representatives of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and other stakeholders.

The DCI had to please many constituencies. Theater owners wanted as little disruption in their normal operations as possible. The creative community wanted a high-quality image system that would not be inferior to 35 mm film. Studios wanted an economical format that would resist hacking and piracy.

Across three years of discussion and tests, the DCI settled on specifications. Lucas's *Star Wars* format had been HD at 1.3K resolution (about 1,300 vertical lines). The DCI's participants settled on 2K resolution (about 2,000 vertical lines) as a minimum, with 4K (4,000 lines) as an optional upgrade. Other specifications involved color depth and frame rates. These guidelines were sent to manufacturers, who were already designing projection systems.

A more prolonged dispute involved security. Eventually, the DCI settled on the same encryption devices used by banks for online transactions. The whole batch of audio, video, and encryption files became a "Digital Cinema Package" (DCP). It could be opened only with an alphanumeric key that was sent separately to the theater. The DCP could play only on that theater's server. If a hacker tried to open the files, they would self-destruct.

In July 2005, the DCI published the specifications for digital cinema. Manufacturers were making hardware. The studios were prepared to ship files on hard drives. But most films were not released in digital versions because there were so few screens available. The new question was crucial: Would the theater chains switch to the new technology?

Theaters Go Digital

Theater owners were shocked by the cost of the changeover. A digital projection system for one screen, with projector, server, and other hardware, cost between $60,000 and $100,000. Like a personal computer, the system might need replacement every few years. Worse, many US chains were recovering from bankruptcy, a result of the overbuilding of megaplexes in 1999–2001. In 2005, when Lucas demanded that theaters project *Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* in the new digital format, fewer than 100 screens complied. The president of the theater owners' association explained: "I don't put projectors in just for *Star Wars*."[4]

The industry coaxed the exhibitors with incentives. The Hollywood Majors would cooperate with equipment suppliers on payment plans for the new rigs. The studios also pointed out that digital projection made theater operation cheaper. Highly paid projectionists could be replaced by teenage labor who could simply switch on the system. The manager could program all the screenings on the basis of a playlist, which would automatically screen trailers, ads, and the feature according to schedule. The crucial factor in exhibitors' calculations, though, turned out to be 3D.

3D: The Killer App 3D had never worked reliably on film. Two projectors running simultaneously often created

synchronization and focus problems. But the digital format allowed 3D to be encoded easily, and a single projector could handle it. Moreover, the theater could charge more for 3D tickets. As trial runs, Disney released 3D versions of *Chicken Little* (2005), *Bolt* (2008), and some concert films with Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers. The 3D box-office numbers were encouraging. 2009 became a turning point, with sixteen digital 3D releases, including *Up*, *Monsters vs. Aliens*, and *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*. All did exceptionally well in 3D versions. Then in December came *Avatar*.

James Cameron's science-fiction epic became the highest-grossing initial release to that time, earning $2.7 billion globally. After forty-seven days of exhibition, more than 80 percent of *Avatar*'s earnings came from 3D screenings. Exhibitors were now convinced that digital projection was worth its cost. At the same moment, America's three biggest chains, which controlled 13,000 prime screens, won Wall Street backing to convert their theaters. The smaller chains had to compete, so they joined the trend. From 2008 to 2012, the number of North American digital screens shot up from 5,700 to 33,000. About half of those could show 3D.

Theaters Convert Outside the United States, digital exhibition had started somewhat earlier, following Lucas's lead with 1.3K systems. The DCI committee pushed the innovation forward by standardizing Hollywood practice, and other nations were forced to follow. As in America, the wave of 3D hits in 2009 speeded up the international changeover. The studios were willing to cut deals with overseas chains, as a swift conversion would benefit American films.

Audience support was there as well. Two billion dollars of *Avatar*'s box-office gross came from outside the United States. In China, the film was so popular that people paid more than $100 for tickets. Soon most countries were converting to 2K and 4K projection. New theaters in China, Russia, and other growing markets were built digital from the start.

Some regions, notably Latin America, converted slowly, and 1.3K projection hung on in Egypt and India. But the plan that the DCI launched in 2005 had become global ten years later. By the end of 2015, 97 percent of the world's 150,000 commercial theater screens were digital. Distribution of new films on 35 mm prints was for practical purposes over.

Theaters found new sources of revenue. To fill off-peak periods of the week, managers programmed plays, operas, and other "alternative content" that could attract moviegoers at higher prices. Fan-driven events could draw audiences as well. In 2013, the 50th anniversary episode of *Dr. Who*, "The Day of the Doctor," played on TV in 2D and simultaneously in 3D in theaters around the world, earning $10 million. Small-town houses could stream live TV coverage of football games; even though admission could not be charged, concession sales were lively and the theater gained good will in the community. Thanks to digital formats, the multiplex was becoming not only a movie house but also a forum offering mass-market and elite attractions side by side.

Instead of stability, though, the changeover created more churn. Because 3D dimmed the image, manufacturers developed laser projectors of much greater brightness and looked forward eventually to LED displays. Because digital pan shots had a tendency to be jerky, some filmmakers proposed a higher frame rate than 24—48, 96, even 120 frames per second. These rates were claimed to be closer to ordinary vision. Digital sound systems created "3D audio," which multiplied sound channels throughout the auditorium. The Dolby Atmos sound system put speakers in the ceiling. Companies began marketing "4D" effects, which made seats move in synchronization with onscreen action. These "immersive" innovations were possible now that images and sounds were controlled by an integrated computer system.

Promoting Digital Production: Early Adopters and Film Diehards

While trying to persuade theater owners to go digital, the DCI courted filmmakers. Most directors, cinematographers, and other image artisans were reluctant to change their ways. For one thing, digital formats changed every few years, but 35 mm photographic film had been the norm since the 1890s. Film was more reliable than digital media for archiving movies for future generations.

There were also aesthetic factors, usually summed up as the "film look." Video imagery broke up on a movie screen, while film worked well on the large scale. 35 mm had a greater dynamic range; digital images tended to give good detail in dark areas but to flare and wash out in highlights. Moreover, film stocks were continually improving, so digital systems were playing catch-up. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, most professional cinematographers were convinced that no digital system could match 35 mm, let alone 70 mm.

Ever the digital advocate, George Lucas had asked Sony and Panavision to design an HD digital camera for *Star Wars II: Attack of the Clones* (2002). The first film to use the camera was the French fantasy-detective film, *Vidocq* (2001). The filmmakers took advantage of digital's

sharpened edges and the ease of adding backgrounds, skies, and special effects in postproduction (**Color Plate 30.7**).

Knowing the widespread skepticism about digital cinematography, the DCI committee produced a series of test films. The results convinced the committee that 2K was a fair equivalent to the standard 35 mm release print, while 4K was significantly better. Once the DCI specifications were in place, equipment manufacturers could make further improvements. In the years that followed, Panavision, Arri, Red, and other camera suppliers competed to offer filmmakers greater control over the image, especially in 4K capture. Roger Deakins spoke for many cinematographers in 2011 when he declared that the Arri Alexa camera "gives me a lot more options" than a film camera could.[5]

Some films had already been shot on HD video: *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004), *Collateral* (2004), *Mission: Impossible III* (2006), *Zodiac* (2007), *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead* (2007), and *Speed Racer* (2008). But the balance was tipped with the wide conversion of theaters that began in 2009. One researcher found that in 2008, about 20 percent of Hollywood's top-grossing films were shot digitally; by 2015, nearly 90 percent were.[6] A film might combine digital and analog photography because some filmmakers believed that digital worked best for revealing shadow areas in night scenes, while film was preferable for daylight.

During the 2010s, most filmmakers around the world adopted the new moving-image medium. Still, there were holdouts. On big-budget films, digital production did not usually cut costs. Image and sound data required massive amounts of storage and backup. Five hours of uncompressed 4K shooting yielded a 2-TB file, and all the footage shot for a film could come to 600 TB. Equipment manufacturers used proprietary file systems that did not necessarily blend in a single workflow. A great deal of time and money was spent on "transcoding" files between camera, CGI, color, editing, sound, and other applications. Some filmmakers preferred the simplicity of 35 mm film's workflow.

Moreover, many Hollywood directors of both blockbusters and smaller projects savored the film look. *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012), *Boyhood* (2014), *Mission: Impossible–Rogue Nation* (2015), *Jackie* (2016), and *Once Upon a Time. . . In Hollywood* (2019) all originated on film. Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012) was filmed on Super-16, and his *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) on 35 mm. The cinematographer for *La La Land* (2016) noted: "When you choose from Super 8 mm, 16 mm, 35 mm, and 65 mm, you have more variety of looks than by shooting digital and trying to tweak later in post."[7] For Spielberg, the grain in film emulsion yielded a pulsating life that the perfection of digital lacked.

A few loyalists even tried to revive film-based projection. 70 mm screenings were demanded by Paul Thomas Anderson (*The Master*, 2012) and Quentin Tarantino (*The Hateful Eight*, 2015). Christopher Nolan induced some multiplexes to show film prints of *Interstellar* (2014) and *Dunkirk* (2017). Yet even these film-loving directors accepted the need for the final product to be transferred to the DCP for most venues.

Effects on Film Form and Style

Digital Technology and Genres Digital filmmaking's rise in the 2000s and supremacy in the 2010s reinforced several current genre trends. The continuing popularity of science-fiction and fantasy adventures spurred the development of CGI and motion capture, as seen in the special-effects Academy Awards given to *The Matrix* (1999), *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003), *King Kong* (2005), *Avatar* (2009), *Inception* (2010), *Gravity* (2013), and *Ex Machina* (2015).

Likewise the growing trend of comic-book franchises was perfectly positioned to exploit the shift to digital filmmaking. Now special effects could present the stupendous speed of Spider-Man's web-spinning and the lifelike animation of the foul-tempered raccoon Rocket in *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014). The folding city landscapes of *Doctor Strange* (2016), derived from the collapsing dream visions of *Inception*, showed that the superhero saga had become utterly dependent on what digital cinema could do. With wraparound sound, 3D imagery, and big IMAX screens, the franchise films aimed to be "immersive" experiences that could not be duplicated even in the finest home theater. Digital convergence benefited other types of films too, in particular, animation and 3D.

The Rise of CG Animation Traditional cel animation drew on the new computer technology by applying it to repetitive drawing and coloring tasks. The result blended in with the traditional look. Disney's *Tarzan* (1999) enhanced backgrounds with a program called Deep Canvas, and DreamWorks' *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) used computer-generated imagery in fully half of its shots, including the parting of the Red Sea.

But the creation of *CG animation* created a more spectacular style. This was sometimes called "3D animation," not because it involved stereoscopic viewing but because the new digital techniques gave animated figures more volumes, as opposed to the apparent flatness of traditional cel animation (see Streamlining American Animation p. 66 and The Animated Part of the Program p. 142). The new CG programs gave characters and settings the sort of solidity seen in puppet or clay images. CG animation can be credited with a

renaissance of animated features, which fitted smoothly into Hollywood's blockbuster and franchising strategy (see Digital Animation: Borderline Becomes Mainstream box).

Studio animation was expensive, but independent filmmakers had access to cheaper animation programs. One genre that emerged was *machinima* (*machin*e plus an*ima*tion). Here repurposed game engines extracted characters from games and used them in a story. Other tools, like the Antics previsualization program, were turned to similar ends.

Inevitably, digital technology became cheaper, and small companies and individuals could afford to make feature films, some sophisticated enough to play in festivals and theaters. Monitors that could be drawn on with a digital pencil became available. Nina Paley used a Cintiq monitor to make *Sita Sings the Blues* (2008). Her mixture of sketchy line drawings, silhouettes, and polished drawings showed the versatility and control that could be achieved with simple digital tools (**Color Plate 30.9**).

DIGITAL ANIMATION: BORDERLINE BECOMES MAINSTREAM

From the 1930s to the late 1990s, only two or three US animated features were released in any year. When one achieved a top spot in the world's box-office rankings, it was likely to be from the Disney studio. From *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to *The Lion King* (1994), only Disney films ranked alongside the biggest live-action hits.

But in 1995, *Toy Story*, from the little-known company Pixar, ranked first in domestic grosses, ahead of Disney's *Pocahontas*. Made entirely by computer, *Toy Story* launched an era that multiplied the number of animated features released each year and empowered them to compete with live-action movies for a public of all ages. CG animation enabled animated films to benefit from blockbusters, franchising, and synergy (see Franchise Fever p. 649).

The development of CG animation was pioneered largely by two firms: Pixar and Pacific Data Images (PDI). Pixar began in 1978 as an experimental special-effects unit owned by Lucas, but it became an independent company in the mid-1980s—the only company wholly devoted to CG animated films. In 1988, Pixar created the first version of a versatile rendering system designed to allow digital image compositing, painting, lighting, and the functions vital to a completed shot. This system became RenderMan, which was not only used on Pixar's own films, beginning with the short *Tin Toy* (1988), but also made commercially available to the film industry.

PDI was founded in 1980 and soon became a leader in supplying computer animation to television. After providing computer animation for *Antz* (1998), it became a subsidiary of DreamWorks. Its "global illumination" program created more realistic lighting by calculating both direct illumination and reflected light within a scene. The technique was first used on *Shrek 2* (2004) and became standard industry practice.

During the 1980s and 1990s, limitations in computer speed and memory confined animators to smooth surfaces and simple shapes. Toys and insects with little surface texture were used as characters in Pixar's *Toy Story* and *A Bug's Life* (1998), as well as in *Antz*. As computer memory and flexibility grew, animators could add complex textures and control hundreds of different points on a figure. For *A Bug's Life*, Pixar devised translucent leaves; in *Monsters, Inc.* (2001) it tackled fur (see Color Plate 30.4); *Finding Nemo* (2003) demanded a realistic undersea environment, while *Brave* (2012) created the bushy, curly hair of the heroine. Other animation studios developed software as well.

Puppet, cel, and other traditional types of animation were still viable, but even they employed digital tools. Digital programs could handle the repetitive work of coloring cels. Laika, the foremost American firm exploring puppet animation, developed a method for laser-printing thousands of interchangeable faces for its puppets in *ParaNorman* (2012; **Color Plate 30.8**; **Video 30.1**). The result was an enhanced subtlety in their changing expressions. Scenes from *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016) placed puppets in front of green screens just as in live-action shooting, to allow for digital special effects to be added.

Toy Story had proven the technical viability and financial rewards of CG animation. Disney acquired Pixar in 2006. Pixar head John Lasseter revitalized Walt Disney Animation Studios by converting it to digital production (see Disney World Gets Bigger p. 650). The two units' franchises included the *Toy Story*, *Cars*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, and *Frozen* series. In turn, other Majors began creating their own cartoons or commissioning other firms to do them.

Along with superhero, fantasy, and action films, feature animation built up a worldwide public during the 2000s and 2010s. In later years, three to five of the global top ten films were likely to be entries in CG animation franchises. Thanks to digital technology, animation achieved new prominence, and the ancillary possibilities—toys, games, TV spinoffs, and the like—were helping Hollywood's bottom line.

The Revival of 3D Filmmaking After the original cycle of stereoscopic films in the 1950s (see Wider and More Colorful Movies p. 288), 3D productions were rare. In the 1980s, the large-format IMAX system shot a number of successful documentaries in 3D.

Another push to innovate 3D filmmaking started in the mid-2000s, when digital imaging made 3D feasible. James Cameron proved a prophet when he commissioned a 3D camera system built to his specifications for the IMAX feature *Ghosts of the Abyss* (2003). The film documented visits to the undersea wreck of the *Titanic*. Eventually Cameron's system would be used on his blockbuster *Avatar* (2009), on other directors' features such as *Hugo* (2011) and *Life of Pi* (2012), and for sports coverage during the short-lived vogue for 3D television.

The digital conversion enabled 3D to take off. Most multiplexes that converted to digital could show 3D in some auditoriums, so it made sense to release films in that format as well as in 2D. Partly because of the ticket upcharge for 3D, many of the top-grossing pictures after 2009 had both 2D and 3D releases.

CGI animation was a natural choice for stereoscopic presentation because the 3D effects could be built in from the start of production. 3D required twice as much rendering for the twin images, but the enormous success of the results on the world market warranted the expense. The one hundred top-grossing 3D films included more than forty animated titles, led by *Finding Dory* (2016), *Toy Story 3* (2010), and *Frozen* (2013).

Live-action films could be shot in 3D or converted from 2D versions. 3D conversion was initially planned as a way to revive older hits. A 3D version of Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993) found success released as a Christmas classic. But few old films got a makeover. Far more common was the practice of shooting a new project in 2D and then converting that for 3D. This happened with *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009), *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), *The BFG* (2016), and many other features.

As theaters raced to add stereoscopic capability, the proportion of US box office earned by 3D films soared from 2 percent in 2008 to 21 percent in 2010. Although receipts leveled out at about 15 percent by the mid-2010s, 3D releases continued to pour forth—largely sustained by the Chinese market. During that country's theater-building boom (see The Dragon Grows Stronger p. 638), 3D was widely installed. By 2015, China surpassed the United States as a market for 3D by more than a billion dollars.

After decades of failures, 3D was now a permanent, and profitable, part of commercial cinema. For that, producers and exhibitors could thank digital convergence.

Changes in Narrative and Style Digital technology benefited documentary, independent, and avant-garde filmmaking. It gave nonprofessionals access to high-budget creative options. Many of the filmmakers discussed in Chapter 24 moved into digital filmmaking. Often the new tools yielded unprecedented visions denied to traditional cinema, as in *Leviathan* (see New Mergers p. 537), where GoPro action cameras plunged into fishing nets and bobbed to the ocean surface. Reconstructed documentaries like *Tower* (see Cutting the Tie to Photography: Animated Documentary p. 538), blending factual footage with animation, became much more feasible with software. For *They Shall Not Grow Old* (2019), digital technology enabled Peter Jackson to enhance footage from World War I with color and synchronized sound (**Color Plate 30.10**).

Smartphones allowed everyone to be documentarists or backyard Spielbergs. Increasingly, documentarists were using smartphones, with *Olive* (2016) being the first feature-length documentary shot entirely on the format. The fiction feature *Tangerine* (2015), about transgender sex workers, was shot on iPhones (**30.6**; **Video 30.2**). When Iranian director Jafar Panahi was barred from commercial film production, he found that he could document his house arrest on his iPhone, and audaciously called the result *This Is Not a Film* (2011).

In the mainstream film industry, digital techniques were largely put to traditional uses. Classical continuity editing, goal-oriented protagonists, and three-act script structure still ruled studio cinema. Special effects

Tangerine

30.6 *Tangerine* (2015) takes advantage of the extreme wide angle and depth of field of the iPhone camera.

continued to place actors in artificial surroundings, with the elaborate matte shots of earlier eras (see Special Effects p. 193) being replaced by greenscreen and bluescreen processes. Similarly, audio software encouraged sound designers to build dense, crisp tracks that fulfilled conventional functions. Now every noise could be sharply articulated. With a few mouse clicks, filmmakers could create those whooshes and rumbles, halfway between music and noise, which became common from the 1990s onward.

Digital tools allowed filmmakers to perform familiar tasks with greater speed and precision. Instead of gathering hundreds of actors, software could generate a crowd by multiplying and varying a few individuals. Similarly, in analog picture editing, editors had found it laborious to create passages of fast cutting, but the ease of digital editing allowed them to make their shots very short—an imperative in the style of intensified continuity (see Intensified Continuity: A Style for the Video Age p. 660). Cutting rhythms were speeding up even before Avid, Lightworks, Final Cut Pro, and other programs came along, but these innovations accelerated the trend.

At the other extreme, before the arrival of digital capture, there had already been a trend toward lengthy tracking shots in fiction films. The Steadicam had facilitated following actors through a setting (see New Production and Exhibition Technologies p. 457). Such shots were limited by the length of a film reel, in 35 mm about ten minutes. But digital filmmaking allowed the director to create much lengthier shots. Aleksandr Sokurov used HD video for *Russian Ark* (2002; see Color Plate 25.34) because it allowed him to film a single ninety-minute take. A similar real-time strategy informed the heist thriller *Victoria* (2015), which carries a 138-minute shot over twenty-two Berlin locations between darkness and dawn. In about the same running time, the Iranian one-take drama *Fish and Cat* (2013) broke down the sense of real duration by building in flashbacks and replaying scenes from different characters' viewpoints.

Digital tools could also create long takes by stitching several camera movements into one shot, an increasingly common tactic in American cinema. The opening of *Snake Eyes* (1998) blended several tracking shots into a sinuous thirteen-minute take. In *War of the Worlds*, a camera movement gliding into, out from, and around a minivan was stitched together out of location footage and bluescreen shots made in the studio. Similar techniques were used to create the long-take dance number at the beginning of *La La Land* and the impression that most of *Birdman* (2014) consisted of one shot.

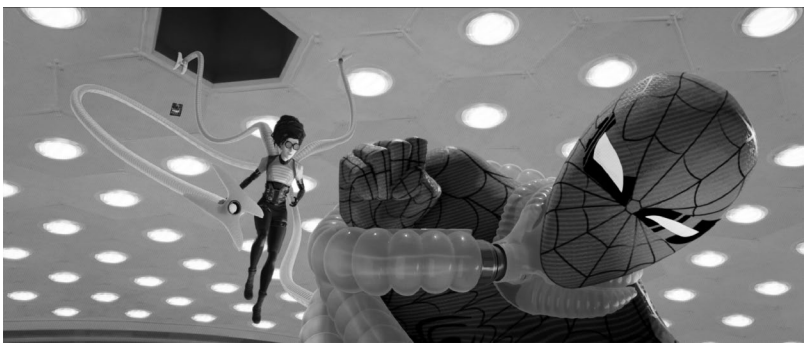
From time to time across film history, there have been fictionalized documentaries, such as the simulated reportage of Peter Watkins's *The War Game* (1966; see France: Cinéma Vérité and Provocation p. 432). Again, portable video cameras made this sort of film much easier to make, as *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) proved. In the digital age, low-budget efforts presented themselves as "found footage" retrieved from consumer camcorders. *Alone with Her* (2006), the Danish film *Offscreen* (2006), *Cloverfield* (2008), and *Paranormal Activity* (2009) launched a cycle of such films.

"There's a completely digital 20-year-old version of myself that can make movies now."[8] This remark from 50-year-old actor Will Smith points up how advances in CGI had changed acting. Thanks to digital reconstruction, the performances of Brandon Lee in *The Crow* (1994), Oliver Reed in *Gladiator* (2000), Paul Walker in *Furious 7* (2015), and other players who had died during production could be completed. Filmmakers could refashion their performers. Nearly an hour of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008) was devoted to aging the face of Brad Pitt. By contrast, *The Irishman* (2019) "de-aged" the elderly actors for scenes earlier in their lives. Many observers believed that a frontier had been crossed when New Zealand's Weta Workshop created a wholly digital human, capable of smoothly interacting with physical actors (**30.7**). These unreal but eerily realistic faces and bodies, akin to the "deepfakes" popping up on the Internet, offered filmmakers new creative possibilities.

Viewers could not detect concealed cuts in stitched-together long takes, and they might get accustomed to aging and de-aging technology, but they were forced to notice the stylized pictorial effects that digital technology could provide. Remaking the image shape or aspect ratio had long been possible in film-based production. *Old Ironsides* (1926), *Brainstorm* (1983), *The Horse Whisperer* (1998), and other features had experimented with changing screen dimensions during a movie. Software made such experiments much easier. *The Grand Budapest Hotel* assigned different aspect ratios to distinct time periods, while Xavier Dolan's *Mommy* (2014) was filmed in a 1:1 format and Feng Xiaogang's *I Am Not Madame Bovary* (2016) used

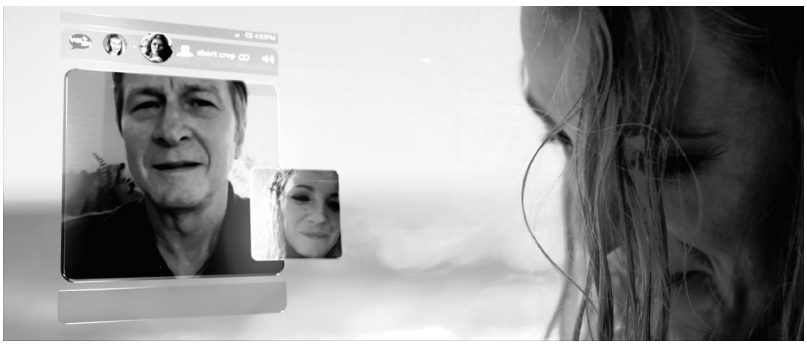
Gemini Man

30.7 *Gemini Man* (2019): Thanks to time travel, a protagonist can partner with his younger self.



Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse

30.8 *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018), like many modern 3D films, avoids the pop out effect of 1950s 3D and emphasizes figures stretching into the distance, in the manner of classic 1940s deep-focus (see Cinematography Styles p. 195).



The Shallows

30.9 In *The Shallows* (2016), digital compositing enables mobile-phone shot/reverse shot. The emphasis on close-ups is characteristic of intensified continuity (see Intensified Continuity: A Style for the Video Age p. 660).

circular and vertical masking for different locales in the story (see 27.35). Here digital cinema was harking back to the masks and irises of silent cinema (see 4.7, 4.8, 17.7).

Photographic experimentation was on the digital menu as well (see Directing Digital: David Fincher and Jean-Luc Godard box). Tony Scott used the new postproduction techniques to create abstract compositions and scorched color palettes (see Color Plate 28.5). For *Collateral*, largely shot on uncompressed HD video, Michael Mann gave film noir a new look, with phosphorescent bursts flaring up in a murky night (**Color Plate 30.11**; **Video 30.3**). Filmmakers seemed to compete in making darker and darker images. Digital cameras enabled *Zero Dark Thirty* (2013) to simulate low-level light conditions for its nighttime raid.

3D developed its own stylistic conventions. 3D films of the 1950s (see Wider and More Colorful Movies p. 292) had often exploited shock effects, with action hurled into the audience. Instead, filmmakers working in digital 3D tended to make the screen surface a window into a world with rich depth. Because CG animation offered more control than live action, there could be deep-focus compositions recalling the aggressive style of 1940s Hollywood (**30.8**). But occasionally live-action comedies activated in-your-face 3D, as when a chase in *A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas* (2011) sent hot dogs sailing toward the viewer. And 3D could demarcate its own world. In *TRON: Legacy* (2010), the real world is 2D, while the realm of computer gameplay has vivid depth and volumes.

George Lucas had predicted that digital filming would make films less like photography and more like painting. All the ways the cinema could now be manipulated in postproduction seemed to bear him out. The filmmaker could minutely adjust color, composition, and movement long after shooting had ended. The screen could easily present multi-frame imagery, or paste cellphone readouts and Internet pages over dramatic action, like a collage (**30.9**). The movie frame was now a canvas that filmmakers could fill with anything they could imagine. In a way, the cinema was returning to its nonphotographic origins, to optical toys and the hand-painted drawings on Reynaud's Praxinoscope (see Major Precursors of Motion Pictures p. 6)—but in digital form.

DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Once the DCI standards came to be accepted in exhibition and in most principal photography, there remained one other area to be adjusted. That was distribution. Ideally, there would be digital distribution in both the theatrical market and the "aftermarket"—the consumption of films by viewers at home or on the go. But few would have predicted that digital distribution would significantly change the motion-picture industry. Along with the rise of China, the explosion of digital delivery was one of the major events of film history in the 2010s. It created new business models, new mergers, and a new version of the entertainment economy.

DIRECTING DIGITAL: DAVID FINCHER AND JEAN-LUC GODARD

David Fincher welcomed digital cinema. His films showed how Hollywood storytelling, with a few updated wrinkles, could be adjusted to the new tools and techniques. Over the same years, the veteran New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard saw the new platform as an arena for very un-Hollywood experimentation in fiction, documentary, and avant-garde expression.

Fincher grew to maturity in the 1980s–1990s media business. Straight from high school, he began work in animation, soon becoming a special-effects technician for Lucas's ILM. He went on to direct music videos for Madonna and other stars, and he set up a company to make television commercials.

At the age of twenty-seven, he made a major feature, *Alien*^{3} (1992), which was a critical and commercial failure but revealed his skills with image design and special effects. Fincher gained fame with the precise, sometimes aggressive style on display in *Se7en* (1995), *Fight Club* (1999), *Zodiac* (2007), *The Social Network* (2010), *Gone Girl* (2014), and other features. He quickly entered the emerging market for subscription streaming by producing and shooting episodes of *House of Cards* (2013–2018) for Netflix.

Fincher prepared his 35 mm features meticulously, often laying out scenes in detailed previs. A virtual 3D version of the crucial newsroom set in *Zodiac* allowed him to explore the room and to plot eyelines, ensuring that the adjacent conference room was visible from every desk. For *Panic Room* (2002), he designed motion-control techniques to permit flamboyant camera movements, such as a tracking shot through the handle of a coffeepot.

In postproduction, another area which Fincher totally supervised, he embraced the freedom of the digital intermediate to add visual effects (**30.10**). Fincher showed himself in tune with fan culture by sprinkling Easter eggs throughout *Fight Club* and by adding many detailed supplements for the 2000 DVD release, which became a model for collectors' editions.

Using HD on commercials convinced Fincher that digital media could replace 35 mm as a capture medium. *Zodiac* became one of the first Hollywood features to use uncompressed HD. Recording direct to a hard drive and editing on Apple's Final Cut Pro, Fincher proved that digital production was not only feasible but also artistically rewarding. He had always shot in low light (*Se7en* was sometimes called a "color noir"), and HD gave a range of bright and dark areas that Fincher could exploit in *Zodiac*'s tale of a serial killer (**Color Plate 30.12**). Creative options in postproduction were just as important. For a tense interrogation, Fincher up-resolved the images to make them more hard-edged than surrounding sequences.

Zodiac convinced Fincher to give up 35 mm. As soon as it was feasible, he shot at 6K resolution, which allowed him to extract a dense 4K frame in postproduction (**30.11**). Extraction allowed him to stabilize shots, recompose them, and even add camera movements. With split-screen, he could insert actors' performances from different takes into the same frame. He could exploit face replacement to create a pair of twins (*The Social Network*) and to bind star Brad Pitt's face to other actors' bodies (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, 2008). For *Gone Girl*, 80 percent of the shots were enhanced in some way during postproduction. Throughout these years, Fincher developed a customized workflow that let his team instantly access hundreds of hours of footage as well as script changes and in-progress visual effects.

Despite his digital innovations, Fincher's filmmaking remained tied to current Hollywood norms. The unreliable narration of *Fight Club* and the unresolved ending of *Zodiac* were part of a general trend toward experimental storytelling fostered by Tarantino, Soderbergh, and other directors of Fincher's generation. These experiments stretched the boundaries of classical storytelling, but they did not break out of them. By the late 2010s, Fincher proved himself an elegant craftsman who skillfully adapted bestsellers such as *Gone Girl* and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011), engaged with long-form television, and updated production methods for the digital age.

Jean-Luc Godard had moved heavily into analog video in the 1970s with a series of free-form documentaries (notably *Six fois deux*, 1976). He returned to feature filmmaking with *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* in 1979 and

Fight Club

30.10 Yuppie consumerism: *Fight Club* follows its protagonist through his apartment as catalog descriptions of his furniture float around him.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

30.11 The 6K frame captured in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. The smaller 2.40:1 frame extracts the final image, but at 5K resolution. That permits further manipulation without loss of quality before finishing at 4K.

Farewell

30.12 For *Farewell to Language*, Canon single-lens reflex cameras were mounted side by side, one upside down, to yield stereoscopic images. The footage was harmonized using editing software.

followed that with films displaying fragmented story lines and exquisite 35 mm imagery (see Theater and Painting: Godard and Others p. 564). He continued to make analog videos of varying lengths, as a painter might expand into etching or drawing. The culmination of his analog efforts was the massive eight-part *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988–1998), a collage-like essay on the relation of film to twentieth-century history. Over these years, he maintained a video studio in his home in a small Swiss town.

"The digital," Godard worried, "will be a dictatorship." But his feature film *In Praise of Love* (*Éloge de l'amour*, 2001), a meditation on how Holocaust survivors cope with the memory of World War II, tried to treat the format poetically. The film's first part was shot on crisp black-and-white film, while a second part set years earlier was presented in the low resolution and shrieking color of consumer mini-DV (**Color Plate 30.13**).

While many directors were converting to the DCI standard, Godard shot *Film Socialisme* (2010), his first fully digital feature. The three parallel parts of this enigmatic work present wealthy war criminals on a Mediterranean cruise, then a family who tend a gas station, and a final montage of television footage surveying the state of modern Europe. Godard mixed gorgeous shots from professional HD cameras with trembling cellphone-quality video. The noisy images yielded what his cameraman called "interesting defects."

In *Farewell to Language* (*Adieu au langage*, 2014), Godard contrived the most peculiar 3D film yet made. Refusing bulky and expensive digital hardware, Godard and his cameraman created a defiantly low-tech rig (**30.12**). 4K shots were cut together with footage from GoPro, Flip Video, and other consumer devices. *Farewell to Language* breaks the emerging rules of 3D, with lawn chairs jutting out into the audience and shots taken from a toy train. At one point, the two lenses pan in opposite directions, so that the viewer sees one image floating on top of the other.

With this film, Godard seemed to be saying farewell not only to language but also to the 35 mm format he had used so ingeniously for nearly sixty years. Yet many viewers found *Farewell to Language* to be one of his most beautiful films. At the end of his career, the director of *Breathless* (1960) was still pushing cinema in startling, ravishing directions quite opposed to the Hollywood tradition.

Digital Distribution to Theaters

During the conversion to digital projection, the problem was how to get the files to theaters safely. At first, distribution services bundled the film and encryption files into the DCP and loaded that to a hard drive. The hard drives were shipped to theaters by courier. The theater managers were sent a decryption key unique to each theater's server.

The method resembled the delivery system used for 35 mm prints, but with DCPs the studios saved money and kept the films secure from piracy. But why not cut out physical delivery completely? Why not stream films to the theaters? The problem was that for theatrical projection, the file had to be very large, and sending a film through the Internet would expose it to hackers.

The solution was satellite delivery. In 2013, the major US theater chains and several Hollywood companies cooperated to create the Digital Cinema Distribution Coalition. It began by beaming 31 features to 17,000 North American screens. Three years later, more than half of US and Canadian screens were receiving many releases by satellite. As with the hard-drive system, films were "ingested" to the theater's servers well before screening, to assure uninterrupted programming. Other companies provided arthouse theaters with digital delivery as well. Because most of those films were not in 3D or 4K resolution, their smaller file sizes allowed suppliers to use secure broadband networks.

Digital delivery spread to Europe and other territories. For nearly all commercial cinemas, a film on some physical medium was becoming a rare thing. Theatrical cinema had achieved total digital convergence.

DVD: Sales and Rental

Theatrical exhibition thrust a movie into the entertainment economy, but the biggest revenues came from home video—cable, satellite, and physical media. It was in this realm that digital distribution had its biggest impact.

Even before films were shipped as files to theaters, digital distribution had begun with physical media. Introduced in 1997, the DVD (Digital Video Disc) was immediately successful with the public (see DVD Replaces VHS). By 2005, it had replaced videotape as a home-viewing platform. A disc was easier to manufacture than a tape, so consumers could afford to buy rather than rent favorite titles. DVD sales and rentals brought the studios a very substantial income, often more than the box-office take of the films.

The main beneficiaries of the disc boom were the major studios, who used the revenues to support bigger budgets in production. But DVDs helped indie and DIY filmmakers too. A film that might previously have made the rounds of film festivals and then disappeared could have a long life through sales. Specialized companies such as Artificial Eye in England and Kino in the United States distributed niche films. DVDs could also be submitted to film festivals in lieu of expensive film prints. There developed a strong aftermarket for off-Hollywood filmmakers, whose work might find a place in video-store racks around the country.

A digital disc could extend a film's life by adding supplements and commentary soundtracks to the theatrical release. The first DVD to contain deleted scenes and a commentary track was *The Mask* (1994, released on DVD in 1997). The extended DVD editions of the three *Lord of the Rings* films contained four running commentaries, adding up to forty-six hours, and the nearly twenty hours of making-of documentaries per volume set the bar high for subsequent releases.

Some filmmakers saw creative possibilities in their films' afterlife on DVD. Discs could include alternate endings and introduce a degree of interactivity. On DVD, Greg Marks's *11:14* (2003) allowed home viewers to follow its network narrative in a different order than that mandated by the theatrical version. DVD also reinforced fan loyalty. For some years, Hollywood filmmakers had been inserting sly, almost imperceptible jokes, references, and motifs into their settings. One set in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) included imagery of the *Star Wars* robots. These "Easter eggs" became more common with the arrival of DVD because viewers could freeze exact frames. Fans scoured their favorites for insider details, such as the many references to Batman in *Watchmen* (2009) or the ominous citations of Exodus 8:2 in *Magnolia* (1999).

After 2006, DVD sales began to flatten. Despite encryption, the discs were easy to copy. To retaliate, the Majors sought a high-definition disc that could revive sales and block piracy. In the battle between two formats, HD and Blu-ray, the latter won the market. But the Blu-ray format did not halt the slippage in disc rental and sales.

Online Distribution: Downloads and Streaming

By 2000 it was clear that the Internet offered many opportunities for media industries. The question was: How to make it work?

The Internet and Film Culture Most obviously, DVDs could be sold online by both big chains like Amazon and collectors offering rarities. Given the low cost of manufacturing DVDs, independent filmmakers could self-publish

their work and either sell it through their own websites or find a small distributor to do it for them. David Lynch published *Dynamic: 01*, a collection of shorts from his website, through his Absurda company, and distributed it through Subversive Cinema.

The Internet also offered a gigantic arena for displaying films. YouTube, the largest site for uploading free videos, was created in early 2005. By August 2006, it reportedly housed 6.1 million of them, and by early 2008, it attracted so many views that the site's bandwidth cost about a million dollars a day. Ten years later, YouTube officials claimed that 500 hours of video were uploaded every minute.

Clever nonprofessional filmmakers could exploit YouTube, Vimeo, and other Internet resources to distribute their work. In 2008, YouTube established a virtual screening room to showcase independent films.

Hollywood agents and producers began trawling online video sites for talent. Perhaps the most spectacular success was that of David F. Sandberg, who in 2013 posted a three-minute short called *Lights Out*. Shot in his apartment and starring his wife, it went viral and was noticed by a Warner Bros. executive. In 2016, *Lights Out* had become a feature film directed by Sandberg, playing at nearly 3,000 theaters in North America and earning $148.7 million worldwide.

The Internet fostered the growth of other creative initiatives. Classic documentaries were available on the National Film Board of Canada's streaming site. Documentary filmmakers created interactive websites such as *Saving Papua New Guinea's Rain Forests*, which gave users several paths through documents. *Preempting Dissent—Open Sourcing Secrecy* invited citizens to upload testimony, texts, and videos to a database from which users could create their own films.

Online film culture became an enormous ecosystem. Fans and professional critics could post reviews and commentary. Thousands of websites, blogs, and podcasts were devoted to current films as well as stars, genres, technology, and in-depth research. Critics posted video essays analyzing techniques and themes in filmmakers' work. Wattpad, a platform devoted to sharing writing, yielded stories that were eventually adapted to films and streaming shows.

Downloading vs. Piracy DVDs and Blu-ray discs were physical items, "packaged media." Why not use the Internet for downloading films at home? But the risk seemed great, given what had happened to the recorded music industry.

The MP3 software format allowed music to be radically compressed for storage on computers and portable players. In 1999, the online site Napster began allowing people to swap MP3 files, and at its peak it had more than 80 million registered users. Although Napster was shut down, peer-to-peer sites proliferated. Sales of music CDs plummeted from about 10 million in 2000 to less than 4 million in 2006. Releasing digital singles online made little difference. In 2006, 800 million music files were legally downloaded, but there were 20 billion illegal downloads.

The Hollywood studios realized that, as one recording executive warned, "If you can take music, you can take everything else, too."[9] A DVD was heavily encrypted and carried about forty times more information than a CD, so it would take hours to download. Yet already illegal websites were springing up on the "Darknet," offering rare or current films, sometimes in excellent digital copies. Several Asian countries had higher Internet speeds than the United States had, and piracy exploded in those regions.

The Majors' only option was to find ways to sell legitimate downloads. These would have to be so heavily encrypted that they could not be copied, at least by the ordinary consumer. In 2006, online services started selling movie downloads, timed to coincide with a film's DVD release. Apple's iTunes downloads of older films began that same year, and in 2008, all the major studios let iTunes download current DVD releases. Some DVD releases included access to downloadable versions on studios' websites.

At this point, downloads of feature films took many minutes, and playback was often spasmodic. In mid-2008, Internet providers announced a new generation of connections, "broadband," that was faster and more reliable than dial-up. As Internet speeds accelerated, downloads were easier, and it would become possible to stream a film in real time.

Streaming: The Long Tail Wags the Dog

Few people realized it at the time, but streaming services would disrupt the structure and conduct of the world film industry. Streaming a single title on demand as a one-time transaction was one option, but it was not the most successful business model. Instead, a monthly subscription would provide 24-hour "all you can eat" access to a catalogue of movies and television programs.

The major pioneer of this business model was Netflix. The company's founders, Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph, made shrewd use of emerging digital technology. They launched Netflix in 1997, just after the first DVDs appeared. Their business model relied on the still-new Internet, taking orders and payments online and mailing out discs with

prepaid return envelopes. Crucial to the strategy was the subscription model, along with elimination of late-return fees, which were the bane of in-store VHS rentals.

In addition, Netflix took advantage of the "long tail" strategy. Mail order made it possible to offer a big library that would attract consumers of different tastes. By 2008, Netflix stocked 55 million discs and mailed 1.9 million daily. The online rental approach proved so popular that thousands of video rental stores were forced out of business.

Netflix began streaming in 2007, just as broadband speeds were making playback smoother. At first the Hollywood studios were happy to license their films for streaming, so Netflix was able to grow rapidly. Like Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Hastings spent huge sums without showing a profit. The aim was market saturation, and Netflix's subscription base expanded from less than 8 million at startup to nearly 60 million in 2014. Part of that growth was due to overseas expansion.

Two streamers were big enough to compete with Netflix. Hulu, a consortium of three Hollywood studios, commanded a large library of well-known films. The online retailer Amazon benefited from its enormous customer base subscribing to its Prime services.

American online video services grew into the hundreds throughout the 2010s, some catering to specialized tastes. Fandor and Mubi aimed at cinephiles, as did the Criterion Collection, a pioneer of laserdisc and DVD releasing. Criterion launched its own streaming channel, first in partnership with a cable company and then as a stand-alone service. Through these and other platforms, independent films found new audiences. Most filmmakers received small royalties from streaming; Amazon returned four to ten cents per hour. Still, some films could earn significant money. Offered as streaming on demand, *Margin Call* (2011) took in about $5 million, on par with its theatrical returns, while *Arbitrage* (2012) earned $10 million, more than its box-office receipts.

In 2016, US consumer spending on digital delivery surpassed disc sales and rental—a sign that this new distribution system was going to replace physical media. Two years later, streaming video constituted three-quarters of all global consumer web traffic, making online access the primary way millions of people would see films.

Netflix vs. the Majors By 2015, the Internet could be accessed by 8.1 billion digital devices worldwide. That averaged to four devices per household. In the face of this explosive growth, the big media companies recognized that streaming was a threat.

Many of the studios had ties to cable companies, and streaming was poaching viewers. Cable subscriptions fell steeply as "cord-cutters" turned to the cheaper and more varied offerings on streaming. In addition, the billions taken in by the upstart Netflix became a powerful incentive. Clearly, the public's appetite for streaming was bigger than expected. And studios began to realize the need to control their own intellectual property.

As a result, the Majors designed new business plans around streaming. Most began to form their own online services. The Disney+ channel launched in November 2019 with ten million subscribers, and by early 2021 it had more than 90 million. Disney+ offered Disney titles, as well as films from Marvel, Lucasfilm, and Pixar (see Disney World Gets Bigger p. 650). In 2020, Comcast, the cable company that had acquired NBCUniversal, launched its dedicated streaming service, Peacock.

Film libraries became targets for acquisition. Disney enhanced its online buffet by purchasing 21st Century Fox's media wings. AT&T, a dominant Internet provider and telephone company, bought Warner Media. Its platform HBO Max would stream 15,000 hours of content.

Thanks to streaming companies, the Hollywood industry's strategy of vertically integrated production, distribution, and exhibition was being remade for the digital era. The companies producing the films needed to manage distribution (a secure streaming application) and exhibition (digital delivery to viewers' screens). With studios holding on to rights to their films and shows, Netflix and Amazon needed their own media products. Having already created successful long-form programs to rival network and cable offerings, the two firms began to acquire films.

Amazon and Netflix began bidding on films at Sundance and other festivals. They also funded production, with Amazon aiming at modestly budgeted dramas and comedies, some of which were released theatrically (*Manchester by the Sea*, 2016; *Brittany Runs a Marathon*, 2019).

Netflix spent bigger. In 2019, Netflix budgeted $15 billion for original content, which included fifty-seven features—more than twice what any Hollywood studio released that year. Creators praised the company for backing personal projects without creative interference. Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma* (2018; see Reygadas and The Three Amigos p. 600) and Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman* (2019) were financed by Netflix when no studio would support them. In an effort to build local audiences, Netflix also funded many productions outside the United States. It set up a production base with a ten-year lease on England's venerated Shepperton Studios.

Netflix also leased two theaters, one in New York and one in Los Angeles, as showcases for its product. But the company largely held back its features from the big theater chains, believing that the 90-day gap for the nontheatrical windows would make a streaming premiere seem less fresh. Exhibitors throughout the world protested, but Netflix allowed only a few prestigious projects to play festivals and a handful of screens. A narrow limited release not only built interest in a film's online debut but also made it eligible for prizes. From 2014 on, several Netflix features were nominated for Academy Awards. *Roma*, *Marriage Story* (2019), *American Factory* (2019), and others won major honors.

Netflix and Amazon's investment in original material forced other streamers to respond. Apple, which had offered films for sale as downloads, had no legacy library of media products, so it signed major filmmakers and actors to create shows. Disney + spun off sequels to *Star Wars* and began planning series and features exclusively for its channel. Jeffrey Katzenberg contracted his former Dreamworks partner Steven Spielberg to make ten-minute chapters of a horror story to be viewed on smartphones.

America's "big tech" companies had become known as FAANG: Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google. By 2020, all but Facebook had become media companies, thanks chiefly to streaming. They were joined by three competitors in China, which had kept the FAANG companies out (see chart). Alibaba Group was the Chinese Amazon; Baidu was a search engine like Google; Tencent was a blend of Facebook and iTunes. All three enjoyed enormous customer bases—China had 1.5 billion mobile phones in operation—and all saw streaming as the future of online entertainment.

"The first thought on everyone's mind," said a talent agent, "is how do we compete with Netflix?"[10] A firm that began in a small office with eight people stuffing DVDs into red envelopes became worth twice as much as any of the companies that had founded Hollywood. With a value of about $150 billion, Netflix was judged the best-performing listed stock of the 2010s, yielding a return of 4,000 percent. It had more than 150 million subscribers, most outside the United States. In 2019, its profits exceeded those of all major studios except the Disney company. By exploiting digital innovations, Netflix had disrupted the film industry's business model and changed entertainment habits around the world.

Yet the change was not radical. Streaming became an improved version of home video. It supplanted physical media, and unlike cable it could be accessed at any time from computers and mobile phones. More basically, historical patterns of the media business held good. By owning content, streaming companies adapted the classic strategy of vertical integration to the age of digital convergence.

After Streaming: The Fate of the Big Screen With so many movies available on the home screen and on laptops, tablets, and mobile phones, would people ever go to theaters again? Theater chains responded by enhancing comforts. They offered reclining seats, bars and restaurants, and opportunities to book seats online. Many multiplexes lowered ticket prices during slow days of the week. With DCP versions of old films available, theaters could easily program special events, including revivals of fan favorites. Some theaters ran the entire series of *Fast and Furious* movies on the day of the midnight premiere of *Furious 7* (2015).

There were more unusual incentives. Smaller and independent theaters might host singalong versions of classics like *The Sound of Music* (1965) or hire critics to introduce premium screenings and lead discussions afterward. Silent films could be accompanied by local musicians. An elaborate venture was the Secret Cinema movement, whose screenings were held in specially designed environments keyed to the film. Audiences for *The Third Man* found themselves in a four-story warehouse imitating postwar Vienna and filled with actors in period costumes. A cross between a multiplex and a hipster theme park, Secret Cinema's "immersive film" found thousands of eager viewers.

In all these initiatives, the hope was that audiences would turn out for a collective movie experience that no Netflix queue could provide. The hope was sustained by growing global box-office returns and the realization that film attendance, although down somewhat in the United States, was rising internationally.

A major blow to this optimistic picture came with the spread of the coronavirus in early 2020. It halted production in most countries and closed many of the world's theatrical screens. With most live sports suspended, the pandemic boosted the number of viewers streaming filmed entertainment. In March 2020, the amount of video streaming in the United States more than doubled from the same month in 2019. Netflix was the biggest winner, with users streaming nearly 54 billion minutes of content over four weeks. Comparable surges in viewership took place in China, whose exhibition sector had been devastated by the pandemic.

Observers wondered whether homebound people, growing used to the convenience and lower cost of

	AT&T/WARNER MEDIA	COMCAST/ NBCUNIVERSAL MEDIA	THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY	ALPHABET/ GOOGLE	APPLE INC.	NETFLIX	AMAZON	ALIBABA GROUP (CHINA)	BAIDU (CHINA)	TENCENT (CHINA)
Film/TV production and distribution	Warner Bros. Pictures, WB Television	Universal Pictures, Dreamworks Animation, Focus Features, Working Title Films	Walt Disney Studios, Marvel Studios, Lucasfilm, 20th Century Studios, Pixar, Blue Sky Animation	YouTube website	Apple TV+	Netflix Studios	Amazon Studios	Alibaba Pictures	iQivi, Baidu Video, Discovery Networks Asia	Tencent Pictures, Tencent Penguin Pictures
Streaming entertainment	Warner Media, HBO Max	Peacock	Disney+, ESPN+, Hulu (majority shareholder)	YouTube Premium, YouTube TV	iTunes music, Apple TV+	Netflix	Amazon Prime	Youku, Tudou	iQiyi, Baidu Music	Tencent Video, Tencent Comic (animation), Tencent Music
Internet holdings and cellular networks	Cellphone services, wireless Internet provider	Internet provider, Xfinity mobile and cable service, Rotten Tomatoes, Fandango		Google search engine, advertising, consumer web services	iTunes music, iPhone		cloud computing services, video gaming platforms	Search engine, social media, cloud computing services, news and sports websites, online ticketing	Search engine, mobile-phone services, advertising, cloud computing services, social media, news	Search engine, news and information websites, e-commerce, WeChat social media, WeGame
Other	Landline telephony, research	NBC broadcast network, local television stations, theme parks	ABC broadcast network, local television stations, music publishing, stage productions, parks and resorts, merchandising, video games	Consumer electronics	Consumer electronics	DVD rental, publishing	IMDB, Audible, AI, Whole Foods, *Washington Post*	Sports clubs, AI, concerts, newspaper publishing, venture capital, pharmaceuticals, banking, supermarkets		Insurance, VR hardware

streaming, would stop coming to multiplexes when the lockdown eased. The "new abnormal" of life after the pandemic made it likely that many midrange-budgeted pictures would probably never play multiplexes at all.

During the first months of the pandemic, studios in both Hollywood and China opted for online debuts of a few films that had been slated for spring theatrical release. Universal's *Trolls World Tour* shattered records for premium on-demand sales, earning close to $100 million in its first three weeks of streaming. Chinese producers debuted *Lost in Russia*, the latest entry in a popular franchise, on several platforms and attracted 600 million viewers. Yet these results could not count as predictive. The *Trolls* film, lacking a theatrical release, was unlikely to be profitable, and *Lost in Russia* was offered for free.

Film companies typically earned more from theatrical screenings than from streaming, and cutting out a multiplex release completely would eliminate an important revenue stream. For blockbusters, studios in the United States and China were likely to experiment with shortening the window between theatrical release and online availability. Other films would probably open in theaters and streaming channels simultaneously. Even if more titles went "straight to streaming," the online buffet was likely to need releases that drew attention by premiering on the big screen.

NEW MEDIA AND THE FUTURE OF FILM

Digital innovations went beyond traditional film institutions and spawned a rapid succession of new media. All of these fed into audiences' appetites for moving pictures.

Video Games

Among all the forms of merchandising of movies, video games were among the most lucrative. Most games had no connection to particular films, but with revenues in the billions the games industry was a desirable partner for the US studios. As a medium, the video game can be viewed as an extension of film, a type of computer animation with an interactive dimension.

Not until the fifth generation of consoles, released in 1995 and 1996, could game imagery approach the detail and fluidity of film action. *GoldenEye 007*, a 1997 game based on the James Bond release, was the first widely popular film-based video game. As game-making technology became more sophisticated and consoles more powerful, games increasingly mimicked the zooms, rapid cutting, and flowing camera movements common in Hollywood action pictures. 3D games worked with conventions similar to 3D movies.

At first, movie-derived games did not much resemble their sources. Filmmakers were not keen to share their design secrets, and game designers had to start from scratch, working from plot summaries and guessing what the final film would look like. Greater collaboration emerged with Electronic Arts' approach to its first two *Lord of the Rings* games: *The Two Towers* (October 2002) and *The Return of the King* (November 2003). Peter Jackson's technical team provided hundreds of thousands of "assets": drawings, digital sound samples, actor scans, costumes, weapons, photographs, any bit of visual or sonic material from the films' production. Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen, Orlando Bloom, and other stars supplied the voices for their characters, something that was then unusual. Stunt performers for the films supplied motion capture for the games.

By 2007, the seventh generation of consoles made the sharing of assets even easier. While making *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008), Andrew Adamson's team cooperated closely with the designers of the game. The Nintendo DS version of *Prince Caspian* also inaugurated "DGamer," an online community for players of Disney games.

Filmmakers lent their names to games. John Woo, Steven Spielberg, and others saw the new market opening up. The fact that many directors were themselves gamers aided the merging of the two media. Although Jackson had paid little attention to the making of the *Rings* games, in 2005 he acted as a producer and consultant on the one for *King Kong*. Many motion-capture performers and digital animators moved freely between the two industries, and the Writers Guild of America added a video game–writing award to its annual honors. Stars took up promoting games, with Liam Neeson in his *Taken* role threatening his online opponent in a *Clash of Clans: Revenge* advertisement.

Games, like novelizations and television spin-offs, could maintain the brand identity of franchises. There were fourteen games based on *Alien vs. Predator* (2004) and more than seventy derived from the *Star Wars* saga, including Lego and Angry Birds variations. Games, along with other merchandising, kept the *Star Wars* world alive across years in which no films were released. The makers of the *Matrix* trilogy created synergy and fan service by exploiting transmedia storytelling (The Fans and the Suits p. 694). Plot points in the films were expanded or explained in the games (**30.13**, **30.14**).

The Matrix Reloaded

30.13 During a freeway chase in *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003), Morpheus tumbles off a truck onto the hood of a car driven by his ally Niobe. Within the film, her reappearance is a surprise.

Enter the Matrix videogame

30.14 The *Enter the Matrix* video game shows how Niobe got to the point of rescuing Morpheus.

Films adapted from particular games usually failed, but filmmakers drew on video games for visual ideas, as in the chase sequences of *Crank* (2006) and the first-person shooter design of *Hardcore Henry* (2016). The *Matrix* trilogy and *Resurrection of the Little Match Girl* (2002) created plots similar to gameplay levels and virtual quests. Phil Solomon's *In Memoriam* (2005–2008) was a series of experimental films created from the virtual world of *Grand Theft Auto*.

As "e-sports" and immersive games such as *Fortnite* drew young viewers away from streaming films, some features began to rely on gamelike plot patterns. The "fetch quest" for rare objects was seen in the *Avengers* franchise and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (2019). Speaking of the single-shot camera style of *1917* (2019), the director of photography remarked: "I think the film will appeal to a younger generation raised on video games."[11] With digital media borrowing freely from one another, filmmakers were likely to keep treating video games as merchandising, inspiration, and competition.

Virtual and Augmented Reality

The development of video games encouraged Virtual Reality (VR) technology. A headset displayed a fictional scene in 3D, as if viewed by someone inside it. Goggles and earpieces delivered sensory cues—vision, sound, balance, and voluntary movement. With a turn of the head, a flexing of gloves, or pressure on a gamepad or joystick, the user could explore the environment, and virtual body parts might be visible. Augmented Reality (AR) superimposed computer-generated figures and events on the viewer's environment, so that aliens could suddenly peer out from under the breakfast table.

VR and AR devices originated in flight-simulation equipment and stereoscopic toys, but not until the 1990s and the rise of powerful computer programs did researchers turn their attention to creating practical immersive systems. Because of the cost and complexity, most were confined to video-game arcades, but simple ones were available on home consoles. Over the same period,

experimental artists created virtual environments, and a few films based their stories on the trend, notably *The Lawnmower Man* (1992) and *Strange Days* and *Johnny Mnemonic* (both 1995).

As with digital cinema, progress was slow. But the increasing power of cellphone technology brought forth high-resolution screens, motion sensors, and processing power. In 2015, VR systems became more feasible. That year, One-Plus launched a consumer system with a cardboard headset and content posted to the Internet. Samsung, Oculus, and other companies were convinced that VR would be a multi-billion-dollar entertainment business. Their hopes seemed boosted by the frenzy that erupted around the AR application *Pokémon GO* in the summer of 2016. The application was downloaded more than 500 million times.

The problem for the film industry was how to use this new technology. One option was creating the sort of promotional supplements found on DVDs. With VR, a film's world could be explored in a fresh way. So the short *Paranormal Activity: The Lost Soul* (2016) offered new scares and jumps, while *The Martian VR* (2016) allowed the viewer to drive a rover and perform survival tasks in the body of the hero of the 2015 film.

Another option was to create new content for the new medium, as director Eric Darnell did with *Invasion!* (2016), a comic short relying on Hollywood animation conventions. Off-Hollywood filmmakers tried as well, with Aardman Animations making a VR pseudo-documentary sharing the experience of Turkish migration. Purportedly the first VR feature was *Jesus VR* (2016), harking back to the life-of-Christ tableaux seen in early cinema (see Exhibition Expands p. 18).

Filming in VR was difficult. Camera lenses had to cover 360 degrees, arranged in a circle or studded on a sphere, and the crew had to hide during filming. Each shot had to be a long take, as cuts were disorienting and placed huge demands on the refresh rate of the display. In post-production, software stitched the images from different angles into wraparound 3D video.

The obvious commercial uses of VR lay in video games, but Hollywood studios were seeking ways to incorporate ambitious storytelling. The problem was that a narrative depended on guiding the viewer to notice certain things, so complete interactivity was foreclosed. *Jesus VR* had to restrict the user to simple head movements.

Despite the limitations of VR in commercial cinema, some film festivals welcomed the new technology for artistic experiment. In 2017, Alejandro González Iñárritu brought "Carne Y Arena" ("Flesh and Sand," 2017) to Cannes. The spectator, walking barefoot on sand, was placed in the position of a migrant crossing the US border and being seized by guards. In the same year, the Venice festival established an annual section of VR work and gave competitive prizes. VR might remain a parallel medium ("It is not cinema," Iñárritu declared), but some filmmakers hoped that VR scenes might be incorporated in feature films.[12] Producers admitted that they needed what *Avatar* accomplished for 3D, a breakthrough that would fire public enthusiasm for the format.

In the meantime, VR was working behind the scenes. Some shots for *Ready Player One* (2018) and *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (2018) were planned with VR headsets. Jon Favreau created *The Lion King* (2019), a photorealistic remake of the 1994 animated film, without using physical cameras. The crew viewed CGI creatures and settings through headset viewfinders and recorded the action on files. Later stages of production added digital animation effects to better mimic live-action footage (**30.15**, **30.16**).

The Lion King (1994)

30.15 In *The Lion King*, cel animation sacrificed realism but allowed emotions to emerge from faces and bodies.

Lion King (2019)

30.16 In the remake, VR technology and digital animation created textures, movement, and lighting that were more realistic but less expressive (*The Lion King*, 2019).

Digital convergence helped media synergy. It was now easier than ever to transfer a film from one platform to another. It might be projected on a theater screen, ported to a PC monitor, or summoned to a mobile phone. A character in an animated movie could be inserted into a video game or a VR display. A viewer could watch moving images, control a music library, and surf the Internet on the same screen. A film's world could be revisited in a comic book, a video game, or a television series.

Digital convergence worked hand in hand with globalization and the power of the American studios. The top Hollywood pictures were successful in most countries, and they could be delivered on many platforms. But in the swift media churn, with new formats coming up all the time, would traditional filmmaking die?

Evidently not. For one thing, the number of feature films was surging. In 2002, the world made more than 4,000 feature films. In 2016, that number was more than 7,600. This vast output included blockbusters, modest independent films, and every form in between. The boom took place in the face of home video, cable, satellite, DVD, Blu-ray, VOD, and streaming. It happened despite the fact that a handful of American franchises ruled nearly every national market.

But perhaps theaters, the public side of film culture, were in danger? Just the opposite. Screen growth was robust through the 2010s. In 2016, the world had more than 163,000 screens. Even without counting the millions of television monitors, computers, and mobile devices, there were far more movie screens than ever before. And plenty of people wanted to visit them. The year 2015 set a record high in worldwide attendance, 7.4 billion admissions. This amounted to about one ticket for every man, woman, and child on Earth.

Digital convergence, boosted by globalization, encouraged the spread of cinema. Personal computers, the Internet, mobile phones, game consoles, tablets, and portable music devices initially could not display films, but all were eventually adjusted to do that. Film wriggled its way into every media device that came along. From broadcast television and videotape to DVD and streaming, films spread beyond the theater. They entered our living rooms and went with us anywhere. Today, more people are watching more hours of motion pictures than at any other time in history. As newer technologies emerge, we suspect that they too will serve the cinematic traditions that have developed over 125 years.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Ron Magid, "George Lucas: Past, Present and Future," *American Cinematographer* 78, no. 2 (February 1997): 52.
2. Quoted in Adam Dawtrey, "Lynch Invades an 'Empire,'" *Variety.com* (May 11, 2005), at www.variety.com/article/VR1117922566.html?categoryid=1731&cs=1.
3. Scott Bowes, "Fans Have the Muscle to Shape the Movie," USATODAY.com (20 June 2003): www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2003-06-19-movies-cover_x.htm.
4. John Fithian, quoted in David Bordwell, *Pandora's Digital Box: Films, Files, and the Future of Movies* (Madison: Irvington Way Press, 2012), p. 47.
5. Peter Sciretta, "Roger Deakins on Digital vs. 35mm: 'Whether I'll Shoot on Film Again, I Don't Know," *Slashfilm* (February 8, 2011) at http://www.slashfilm.com/roger-deakins-digital-35mm-im-ill-film/.
6. Stephen Follows, "Film vs. digital: What is Hollywood shooting on?" (January 11, 2016) at https://stephenfollows.com/film-vs-digital/.
7. Quoted in Mark Dillon, "City of Stars," *American Cinematographer* 98, no. 1 (January 2017): 60.

8. Carolyn Giardina, "Will Smith, Robert De Niro and the Rise of the All-Digital Actor," *The Hollywood Reporter* (August 10, 2019) at https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/behind-screen/rise-all-digital-actor-1229783.
9. Quoted at http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/time/2000/10/02/napster.html.
10. Quoted in "The Television Will Be Revolutionized," *The Economist*, June 30, 2018, p. 19.
11. Roger Deakins, quoted in Catherine Shoard, "'The Stupidest Thing Humanity Ever Did to Itself': Same Mendes and Colin Firth on 1917," *The Observer* (3 January 2020) at https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/jan/03/the-stupidest-thing-humanity-ever-did-to-itself-sam-mendes-and-colin-firth-on-1917.
12. Quoted in Anne Thompson, "Why Alejandro González Inñárritu Is the Director Who Finally Got VR Right," *Indiewire* (20 May 2017) at https://www.indiewire.com/2017/05/alejandro-gonzalez-inarritu-carne-y-arena-cannes-vr-1201819096/.

We discuss some topics in this chapter further on our blog, *Observations on Film Art*:

On the push to convert to 3D: "Has 3-D already failed?" and "Has 3-D Already Failed? The sequel, part one: RealD-lighted" and "Has 3D already failed? The sequel, part two: RealDsgusted " and "Do not forget to return your 3D glasses" and "As the summer winds down, is 3D doing the same?"

On the increasing number of animated features being released: "By Annie standards"

On Pixar animation: "Rat rapture"

On *Sita Sings the Blues*: "Take my film, please"

On innovation in special effects: "GRAVITY, Part 2: Thinking inside the Box"

On performance capture: "Motion-capturing an Oscar"

On streaming: "The Celestial Multiplex" and "When media became manageable: Streaming, film research, and the Celestial Multiplex"

On new media and narrative: "New media and old storytelling"

On Jean-Luc Godard in 3D: "ADIEU AU LANGAGE: 2 + 2 × 3D"

On Atmos digital sound: "Atmos all around: A guest post by Jeff Smith"

A series on digital projection: "*Pandora's Digital Box*"

GLOSSARY

Academy ratio In the silent era, the film frame was customarily 1⅓ times as wide as it was high (1.33:1). When a soundtrack was added, however, the image became nearly square. The 1.33:1 silent *aspect ratio* was standardized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1932. (In practice, the sound-film ratio was closer to 1.37:1.)

actualities An early term for documentary films.

anamorphic lens A lens for making widescreen films using a frame size close to the *Academy ratio*. The camera lens takes in a wide field of view and squeezes it onto the frame, and a similar projector lens unsqueezes the image onto a wide theater screen. The most famous anamorphic widescreen processes are CinemaScope and Panavision.

animation Any process whereby artificial movement is created by photographing a series of drawings (see *cel animation*), objects, or computer images one by one. Small changes in position, recorded frame by frame, create the illusion of movement.

art cinema (1) A critical term used to describe films that, while made within commercial circumstances, take an approach to form and style influenced by modernist trends (see *modernism*) within "high art" and that offer an alternative to mainstream entertainment. (2) A term used in the US film industry to describe imported films of interest principally to upper-middle-class, college-educated audiences.

aspect ratio The relationship of the frame's width to its height. The standard international ratio was approximately 1.33:1 until the early 1950s, when *widescreen formats* became more common.

auteur The presumed or actual "author" of a film, usually identified as the director. The term is also sometimes used in an evaluative sense to distinguish good filmmakers (auteurs) from bad ones. Identifying and evaluating the director as the film's "author" became a prominent issue after the 1940s, particularly in both French and English language film criticism.

avance sur recettes ("advance on receipts") A government policy of loaning money to a film project based on anticipated ticket sales. The system originated in France after World War II and provided a model for other countries' film-financing policies.

axis of action In the *continuity editing* system, the imaginary line that passes from side to side through the main actors, defining the spatial relations of all the elements of the scene as being to the right or left. The camera is not supposed to cross the axis at a cut and thus reverse those spatial relations. The axis is also called the "180-degree line" (see *180-degree system*).

backlighting Illumination cast onto the figures in the scene from the side opposite the camera, usually creating a thin outline of light on the figures' edge.

block booking An arrangement in which the distributor forces exhibitors to rent several films in order to get the most desirable ones. Common in the US film industry after the 1910s, the practice was declared illegal in the "Paramount decision" of 1948.

camera angle The position of the frame in relation to the subject it shows: above it, looking down (a high angle); horizontal, on the same level (a straight-on angle); looking up (a low angle).

camera movement The onscreen impression that the framing is changing with respect to the scene being photographed. This is usually caused by physically moving the camera, but it may also be caused by a *zoom lens* or certain *special effects*. See also *crane shot, pan, tilt, tracking shot*.

canted framing A view in which the frame is not level; either the right or the left side is lower, causing objects in the scene to appear tipped.

cel animation Animation that uses a series of drawings on pieces of celluloid, called "cels" for short. Slight changes between the drawings combine to create an illusion of movement.

CGI Abbreviation of "computer-generated imagery." Images are generated digitally by starting with a wire-frame figure, motion capture, scanning, drawing on a screen, and other techniques. These are developed into finished images with rendering, animation, coloring, lighting, and other programs that add color, motion, and texture and join figures to settings. Used for animated films and for special effects in live-action ones.

cinematography A general term for all the manipulations of the film strip by the camera in the shooting phase and by the laboratory in *postproduction*.

close-up A *framing* in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large. Most commonly, a close-up shows a person's head from the neck up, or a medium-size object.

closure The degree to which the ending of a narrative film reveals the effects of all the causal events and resolves (or "closes off") all lines of action.

collage A film style that assembles footage from widely disparate sources, often juxtaposing staged fictional scenes with newsreel, animation, or other sorts of material. Explored by experimental filmmakers such as Joseph Cornell in the 1930s, it became a major resource for the avant-garde and political filmmaking of the 1960s.

compilation film A genre of documentary cinema that draws together news footage from various sources in order to convey a large-scale process, such as a war or a social change. Widely used in government and public-affairs documentaries of the sound era, the compilation film was also subjected to experimental treatment by the French Lettrists and Bruce Conner.

continuity editing A system of cutting to maintain continuous and clear narrative action. Continuity editing relies upon matching action, screen direction, and figures' positions from shot to shot. For specific techniques of continuity editing, see *axis of action, cut-in, establishing shot, eyeline match, match on action, 180-degree system, reestablishing shot, screen direction, shot/reverse shot*.

crane shot A shot in which a change of framing is accomplished by having the camera above the ground and moving up, down, or laterally through the air.

crosscutting. Editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually simultaneously.

cut (1) In filmmaking, the joining of two strips of film together with a splice. (2) In the finished film, an instantaneous change from one framing to another. See also *jump cut*.

cut-in An instantaneous shift from a distant framing to a closer view of some portion of the same space.

cycle A relatively short-lived fashion for one subgenre within a genre: for example, the "adult" Westerns in Hollywood during the 1950s or the films about heroic gangsters in the 1980s Hong Kong cinema.

DCP Abbreviation of "digital cinema package." A set of digital files containing an encrypted film and trailers. The DCP may be shipped on a hard drive or transmitted to the theater over by satellite, Internet, or fiberoptic cable. It is loaded ("ingested") into a digital projector.

dedramatization In narrative filmmaking, the strategy of minimizing suspense, emotional high points, and physical action in favor of low-key character portrayal, *temps morts*, and an emphasis on surroundings. Commonly used in European *art cinema* of the post–World War II era, often to explore character psychology, evoke mood, or bring out environmental details.

deep focus A use of the camera lens and lighting that keeps both the close and distant planes in sharp focus.

deep space An arrangement of *mise-en-scène* elements with a considerable distance between the plane closest to the camera and the one farthest away. Any or all of these planes may be in focus.

depth of field The measurements of the closest and farthest planes in front of the camera lens between which everything will be in sharp focus. A depth of field from 5 to 16 feet, for example, would mean everything closer than 5 feet and farther than 16 feet would be out of focus.

diegetic sound Any voice, musical passage, or sound effect presented as originating from a source within the film's world. See also *nondiegetic sound.*

direct sound Music, noise, and speech recorded from the event at the moment of filming; the opposite of *postsynchronization*. Early sound films and Direct Cinema documentaries emphasized direct sound.

dissolve A transition between two shots during which the first image gradually disappears while the second image gradually appears. Briefly the two images blend in *superimposition*.

distance of framing The apparent distance of the frame from the mise-en-scène elements; also called "camera distance" and "shot scale." See also *close-up, extreme close-up, medium shot*.

distribution One of the three branches of the film industry; the process of supplying films to the places where they will be shown. See also *exhibition, production*.

dolly A camera support with wheels, used in making *tracking shots*.

dubbing The process of replacing part or all of the voices on the soundtrack in order to correct mistakes or rerecord dialogue. See also *postsynchronization*.

editing (1) In filmmaking, the task of selecting and joining camera *takes*. (2) In the finished film, the set of techniques that governs the relations among *shots*.

ellipsis In narrative, the omission of certain scenes or portions of the action.

elliptical editing Editing that omits portions of the action, often with the purpose of startling the viewer or creating questions about what occurred in the missing stretches.

establishing shot A shot, usually involving a distant framing, that shows the spatial relations among the important figures, objects, and setting in a scene.

exhibition One of the three branches of the film industry; the process of showing the finished film to audiences. See also *distribution, production*.

experimental cinema Filmmaking that avoids the conventions of mass-entertainment film and seeks to explore unusual aspects of the medium or suppressed or taboo subject matter. When experimental films present plots, these are frequently predicated upon dreams or symbolic journeys, but often experimental films avoid narrative form altogether, exploring lyric, associational, descriptive, or other formal means.

extreme close-up A framing that enlarges a small detail, such as an eye or a line of newsprint.

eyeline match A *cut* obeying the *axis of action* principle, in which the first shot shows a person looking off in one direction and the second shows a nearby space containing what he or she sees. If the person looks to the left, the following shot should imply that the looker is offscreen right.

fade (1) Fade-in: a dark screen that gradually brightens as a shot appears. (2) Fade-out: a shot that gradually darkens as the screen goes black. Occasionally, fade-outs brighten to pure white or to a color.

fill light Illumination from a source less bright than the *key light*, used to soften deep shadows in a scene. See also *three-point lighting*.

film noir ("dark film") A term applied by French critics to a type of American film, usually in the detective and thriller genres, with low-key lighting and a somber mood. Film noir was most prevalent in the 1940s and 1950s, though it was revived occasionally.

film stock The strip of material upon which a series of film frames is registered. It consists of a clear base coated on one side with a light-sensitive emulsion.

filter A piece of glass or gelatin placed in front of the camera or printer lens to alter the light striking the film in the aperture.

flashback An alteration of story order in which events occurring in the present are interrupted by the showing of events that took place earlier.

flashforward An alteration of story order in which the plot presentation moves forward to future events and then returns to the present.

focal length The distance from the center of the lens to the point at which the light rays meet in sharp focus. The focal length determines the perspective relations of the space represented on the flat screen. See also *normal lens, telephoto lens, wide-angle lens*.

focus The degree to which light rays coming from the same part of an object through different parts of the lens converge at the same point on the film *frame*, creating sharp outlines and distinct textures.

frame A single image on the strip of film. When a series of frames is projected onto a screen in quick succession, the spectator sees an illusory movement.

framing The use of the edges of the film frame to select and to compose what will be visible onscreen.

franchise A business strategy in which a single intellectual property generates multiple products. In cinema these typically are additional films, such as prequels, sequels, series, or spin-offs, as well as licensed film-themed merchandise.

free-camera style A cinematographic style from the 1970s on, with handheld camera used extensively, whether to follow characters or record their conversations. The result is nearly constant, if sometimes only slight, camera movement.

front projection A composite process whereby footage meant to appear as the background of a shot is projected from the front onto a screen. Figures in the foreground are filmed in front of the screen as well. See also *rear projection*.

frontality In staging, the positioning of figures so that they face the viewer.

gauge The width of the film strip, measured in millimeters. The standard gauges in film history are 8 mm, 16 mm, 35 mm, and 70 mm.

genres Various types of films that audiences and filmmakers recognize by their recurring conventions. Common genres are horror films, gangster films, and Westerns.

graphic match Two successive shots joined so as to create a strong similarity of compositional elements, such as shapes or patches of color.

handheld camera The use of the camera operator's body as a camera support, either holding it by hand or using a harness. Seen in some silent films, such as Abel Gance's *Napoléon*, but more common in Direct Cinema documentaries and fiction films from the 1960s on.

hard lighting Illumination that creates sharp-edge shadows.

height of framing The distance of the camera above the ground, regardless of its angle on the subject.

high-key lighting Illumination that creates comparatively little contrast between light and dark areas of the shot. Shadows are fairly transparent and brightened by *fill light*.

horizontal integration A practice in which a company in one sector of the motion-picture industry acquires or gains control over other companies in that sector. For example, a production company may expand by purchasing other production firms. See also *vertical integration*.

intellectual montage The juxtaposition of a series of images to create an abstract idea not suggested by any one image. Pioneered by Soviet Montage directors, particularly Sergei Eisenstein, it returned to widespread use in *experimental cinema* and left-wing cinema of the 1960s.

iris A round, moving *mask* that can (1) close down to end a scene (iris-out) or emphasize a detail or (2) open to begin a scene (iris-in) or reveal more space around a detail.

jump cut An elliptical cut that appears to be an interruption of a single shot. Either the figures seem to change instantly against a constant background, or the background changes instantly while the figures remain constant. See also *elliptical editing*.

key light In the *three-point lighting* system, the brightest illumination coming onto the scene. See also *backlighting, fill light*.

linearity In a narrative, the clear motivation of a series of causes and effects that progress without significant digressions, delays, or irrelevant interpolations.

long shot A framing in which the scale of the object shown is small. A standing human figure would appear entirely within the frame, but not in the far distance.

long take A shot that continues for an unusually lengthy time. Common in pre-1917 films, the long take reemerged in the 1930s and 1940s, especially as used by Jean Renoir, Kenji Mizoguchi, and Orson Welles. It soon became a common technique in films throughout the world. See also *plan-séquence*.

low-key lighting Illumination that creates strong contrast between light and dark areas of the shot, with deep shadows and little *fill light*.

Majors A term for the most powerful film companies in the US industry. In the 1920s, the Majors were also knows as the "Big Three" and consisted of Paramount-Publix, Loew's (MGM), and First National. During the 1930s, the Majors (now the "Big Five") were MGM, Paramount, 20th Century-Fox, Warner Bros., and RKO. Before 1948, the Majors achieved their status because they had a high degree of *vertical integration.* Today the Majors consist of several production-distribution companies owned by media conglomerates, such as Comcast/NBC/Universal.

mask An opaque screen placed in the camera or printer that blocks part of the frame and changes the shape of the image. As seen on the screen, most masks are black, although they can be white or colored. See also *iris*.

masking In exhibition, stretches of black fabric that frame the theater screen. Masking may be adjusted according to the *aspect ratio* of the film to be projected.

match on action A continuity cut that joins two shots of the same movement, making it appear to continue uninterrupted.

matte shot A type of *process shot* in which different areas of the image (usually actors and setting) are photographed separately and combined in laboratory work or digital manipulation.

medium shot A framing in which the scale of the object shown is of moderate size. A human figure seen from the waist up would fill most of the screen.

Minors From the 1920s to the 1950s, significant Hollywood production companies that did not own theaters. Also known as the "Little Three," the Minors consisted of Universal, Columbia, and United Artists. See also *Majors*.

mise-en-scène All the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed: the settings and props, lighting, costumes and makeup, and figure behavior.

mixing Combining two or more soundtracks by rerecording them onto a single track.

modernism A broad trend in twentieth-century art and literature emphasizing aesthetic innovation and themes that comment upon contemporary life. Modernist art flaunts difficult, often aggressive or disruptive, forms and styles; it frequently challenges traditional realistic art and criticizes mass popular entertainment. Thematically, modernism displays a fascination with technology, city life, and problems of personal identity. It embraces both political critique and spiritual exploration. Expressionism, surrealism, and atonal music are some typical manifestations of modernism.

Modernism's impact has been felt in *experimental cinema, art cinema*, and some mainstream commercial filmmaking.

montage (1) A synonym for *editing*. (2) An approach to editing developed by the Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s. Soviet Montage emphasizes dynamic, often discontinuous, relationships between shots and emphasizes *intellectual montage*.

montage sequence A segment of a film that summarizes a topic or compresses a passage of time into brief symbolic or typical images. Frequently *dissolves, fades, superimpositions*, and *wipes* are used to link the shots in a montage sequence.

motif An element in a film that is repeated in a significant way.

motion capture (aka "performance capture"). A digital technique whereby sensors are attached to a performer's body and face and the action is shot by camera that pick up the movements of the sensors. Used to build realistic CGI figures.

movement A group of filmmakers working in a common period and place who share some distinctive presumptions about how films should be made. Typically, the films of a movement share formal, stylistic, and thematic features. Some movements, such as French Surrealism of the 1920s, can be seen as fairly unified; others, such as the French New Wave of the late 1950s, are comparatively loose.

nickelodeon boom Beginning in 1905, a period of rapid expansion in the number of small, inexpensive store-front theaters showing programs of short films. During the 1910s, nickelodeons disappeared as larger theaters were built.

nondiegetic sound Sound, such as mood music or a narrator's commentary, represented as coming from a source outside the world of the narrative (the "diegesis").

normal lens A lens that shows objects without severely exaggerating or reducing the depth of the scene's planes. In theatrical filmmaking, a normal lens is 35 mm to 50 mm. See also *telephoto lens, wide-angle lens*.

oligopoly An economic situation in which a few companies control a market, often cooperating with each other to keep out new firms. In the US film industry after the 1920s, the *Majors* and the *Minors* constituted an oligopoly.

180-degree system In the continuity approach to editing, the dictate that the camera should stay on one side of the action to ensure consistent spatial relations between objects to the right and left of the frame. The 180-degree line is the same as the *axis of action*. See also *continuity editing, screen direction*.

overlapping editing Cuts that repeat part or all of an action, thus expanding the duration of the action on screen.

pan A *camera movement* in which the camera body swivels to the right or left. The onscreen effect is of scanning the space horizontally.

pan-and-zoom technique A way of substituting for cutting into and out of a scene; continuous *pans* and zooms concentrate attention on significant aspects of a scene. Roberto Rossellini pioneered this technique in the late 1950s, and it became widespread during the 1960s. Often the pan-and-zoom technique enables the director to create a *long take*. See also *zoom lens*.

pixilation A form of animation in which three-dimensional objects, often people, are made to move in staccato bursts through the use of stop-action cinematography.

plan-séquence ("sequence shot") A French term for a scene handled in a single shot, usually a *long take*.

point-of-view (POV) shot A shot taken with the camera placed approximately where a character's eyes would be, showing what the character would see. A POV shot is usually preceded or followed by a shot of the character looking.

postsynchronization The process of adding sound to images after they have been shot and assembled. This can include *dubbing* voices, as well as inserting *diegetic* music or sound effects. Contemporary fiction films are often postsynchronized. The technique is the opposite of *direct sound*.

previsualization/pre-viz/previs Any sort of image planning but usually applied to simple, digitally animated versions of sequences or whole films. Used to sketch out camera framings, lighting, sets and costumes; to stage actors' movements; to determine the length and order of shots; and to plan special effects.

process shot Any shot involving rephotography to combine two or more images into one or to create a special effect; also called "composite shot." See also *front projection, matte shot, rear projection, special effects*.

production One of the three branches of the film industry; the process of creating a film. See also *distribution, exhibition*.

protectionism A government policy that defends national filmmaking from competition by foreign imports. Typical protectionist policies are quotas on the number of films that may be imported or shown, requirements that theater time be set aside for the domestic product, and forms of financial aid to domestic production.

racking focus Shifting the area of sharp focus from one plane to another during a shot. The effect on the screen is called "rack focus."

rear projection A technique for combining a foreground action with a background action filmed earlier. The foreground is filmed in a studio, against a screen; the background imagery is projected from behind the screen. The technique is the opposite of *front projection*.

reestablishing shot A return to a view of an entire space after a series of closer shots following the *establishing shot*.

reflexivity A tendency, characteristic of cinematic modernism, to call attention to the fact that the film is an artifact or an illusion. Advocates of reflexivity often suggest that while mainstream cinema encourages the viewer to see the onscreen world as real, a more self-conscious cinema will expose the ways in which movie makers create this effect of reality.

reframing Using short *pan* or *tilt* movements of the camera to keep figures onscreen or centered.

rotoscope A machine that projects live-action motion-picture film frames one by one onto a drawing pad or *cel* so that an animator can trace the figures in each frame. The aim is to achieve more realistic movement in an animated cartoon.

run A distinct period during which a film is exhibited following its release. In Hollywood's studio era, a film's "first run" in major urban theaters would be followed by subsequent runs in neighborhoods or small towns. Today, after a film's first theatrical run, later runs include in-flight screenings, screenings in budget theaters, nontheatrical screenings, cable television premieres, and home-video viewings via DVD, Blu-ray, or streaming.

runaway production The practice of Hollywood film companies shooting their films abroad after World War II. Studios found that shooting overseas was economical, and the production could use box-office revenues that the host country had retained ("frozen funds").

scenics Early nonfiction short films that displayed picturesque or exotic locales.

screen direction The right-left relationships in a scene, set up in an establishing shot and determined by the position of characters and objects in the frame, the directions of movement, and the characters' eyelines. *Continuity editing* attempts to keep screen direction consistent between shots. See also *axis of action, eyeline match, 180-degree system*.

sequence shot See *plan-séquence*.

shallow focus A restricted *depth of field*, which keeps only those planes close to the camera in sharp focus; the opposite of *deep focus*.

shallow space An arrangement in which the action is staged with relatively little depth; the opposite of *deep space*.

shot (1) In shooting, one uninterrupted run of the camera to expose a series of frames. Also called a *take*. (2) In the finished film, one uninterrupted image with a single static or mobile framing.

shot/reverse shot Two or more shots edited together that alternate characters, typically in a conversation situation. In *continuity editing*, characters in one framing usually look left, in the other framing, right. Over-the-shoulder framings are common in shot/reverse-shot editing.

side lighting Lighting coming from one side of a person or object, usually in order to create a sense of volume, to bring out surface textures, or to fill in areas left shadowed by light from another source. See also *180-degree system*.

slow cinema Critics' term for art films that employ *long takes*, intervals of silence, and minimalist staging to prolong narrative action. Landscapes and empty interiors prevail over drama, and characters may not reveal their inner lives, resulting in static, severe films.

soft lighting Illumination that avoids harsh bright and dark areas, creating a gradual transition from highlights to shadows.

sound-over Any sound that is not represented as being directly audible within the space and time of the images on the screen. A spoken narration (called "voice-over") is a common example.

sound perspective The sense of a sound's position in space, yielded by volume, timbre, pitch, and, in multichannel reproduction systems, binaural information.

special effects A general term for various photographic manipulations that create illusory spatial relations in the shot, such as *superimposition*, a *matte shot*, and *rear projection*.

storyboard A tool used in planning film production, consisting of comic-strip-like drawings of individual shots, with descriptions written below each drawing.

studio production A manner of filmmaking in which an enterprise creates motion pictures on a mass scale. Usually, labor is divided on the basis of extensive preparation, guided by the shooting script and other designs and plans. Typically, some personnel, such as directors and cinematographers, work on one film at a time, while other staff, such as screenwriters or specialized technicians, work on several films more or less simultaneously. The Hollywood companies between the 1920s and 1950s exemplify studio production.

style The systematic and salient uses of film *techniques* characteristic of a film or a group of films (e.g., a filmmaker's work or a film *movement*).

superimposition The exposure of more than one image on the same film strip.

synchronous sound Sound that is matched temporally with the movements occurring in the images, as when dialogue corresponds to lip movements.

take In filmmaking, the *shot* produced by one uninterrupted run of the camera. One shot in the final film may be chosen from among several takes of the same action.

technique Any aspect of the film medium that can be manipulated in making a film.

telephoto lens A lens of long focal length that affects a scene's perspective by enlarging distant planes and making them seem close to the foreground planes. In 35 mm filming, a telephoto lens is 75 mm or more in length. See also *normal lens, wide-angle lens*.

***temps morts* ("dead moments")** A French phrase used to describe a manner of staging and filming that stresses long intervals between actions or lines of dialogue in which no major narrative development takes place. A *temps mort* might be a lengthy pause in a dialogue scene or an extended sequence showing a character walking through a landscape. Usually, *temps morts* are used to suggest realism, characterization, or mood. The device, seen occasionally in silent films and exploited by Italian Neorealism after World War II, has become widely used in the European *art cinema* since the 1950s.

three-point lighting A common arrangement using three directions of light on a scene: from behind the subjects (*backlighting*), from one bright source (*key light*), and from a less bright source (*fill light*).

tilt A *camera movement* in which the camera body swivels upward or downward on a stationary support. It produces a mobile framing that scans the space vertically.

top lighting Lighting coming from above a person or object, usually in order to outline the upper areas of the figure or to separate it more clearly from the background.

topicals Early short films showing current events, such as parades, disasters, government ceremonies, and military maneuvers. Most topicals recorded the action as it was occurring, but many restaged the event.

tracking shot A *camera movement* in which the camera body moves through space in a horizontal path. On the screen, it produces a mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or to one side.

typage A performance technique of Soviet Montage cinema in which an actor is given features believed to characterize a social group, often an economic class.

underlighting Illumination from a point below the figures in the scene.

vertical integration A practice in which a single company engages in all three basic activities of the film industry (*production, distribution*, and *exhibition*). In the US film industry, the *Majors* were vertically integrated from the 1920s on, owning production facilities,

distribution companies, and theaters. The industry's vertical integration was judged monopolistic by the Supreme Court in the Paramount decision of 1948. In the 1980s, the practice reemerged when production and distribution companies began acquiring interests in theater chains and cable television concerns.

whip pan An extremely fast movement of the camera from side to side, which causes the image to blur briefly into a set of indistinct horizontal lines. Often an imperceptible cut will join two whip pans to create a transition between scenes.

wide-angle lens A lens of short focal length that affects a scene's perspective by bulging straight lines near the edges of the frame and exaggerating the distance between foreground and background planes. In 35 mm filming, a wide-angle lens is 30 mm or less. See also *normal lens, telephoto lens*.

widescreen formats Screen ratios wider than the *Academy ratio*, which is standardized at 1.37:1 in the United States. Important widescreen formats are the US standard of 1.85:1, the most common CinemaScope and anamorphic Panavision ratio of 2.40:1, and the 70 mm ratio of 2.2:1. See also *anamorphic lens, aspect ratio*.

wipe A transition between shots in which a line passes across the screen, gradually eliminating the first shot and replacing it with the next one.

zoom lens A lens with a *focal length* that can be changed during a shot. A shift toward the telephoto range (zoom-in) enlarges the central portions of the image and flattens its planes together. A shift toward the wide-angle range (zoom-out) deenlarges the central portions of the image and separates planes more. See also *telephoto lens, wide-angle lens*.

INDEX

A

A, 440
Aardman Animations, 546–547, 719
Abductees, 538
The Abe Clan, 222
Abe Lincoln in Illinois, 187
Abe, Yutaka, 163
About Elly, 591
Abraham Lincoln, 129
Abrahams, Jim, 469, 656
The Absent-Minded Professor, 293
abstract films, 70, 77, 83–84, 156, 278, 436–438
Absurda company, 713
Ab Tak Chhappan ("56 So Far"), 607
Abuladze, Tengiz, 572, 574
The Abyss, 699–700
Les Abysses, 393
Academy Awards, 200, 211, 277, 313, 345, 367, 369, 374, 380, 400, 406, 423, 472, 547, 550, 572, 575, 584, 596, 598, 607, 629, 634, 658, 666, 675–676, 688– 689, 692, 705, 715
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 131, 140, 172, 191, 703. *See also* Academy Awards
Accatone, 397
Acciaio, 244
Ace in the Hole, 304
Achoura, 608
Acres, Birt, 9–10
Across the Universe, 659
acting
  biomechanical, 108–109, 119
  Method, 305
action-adventure film, 657–658
The Act of Killing, 521–522
The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes, 442–443
Act of Spring, 562
An Actor's Revenge, 348
Actress (1947), 346
Actress (1991), 630
Adalen 31, 504
Adamson, Andrew, 717
Adam's Rib, 304
Adebar, 436, 437
Adieu ... Leonard!, 262
Adieu Philippine, 395
Adoption, 506, 507
Adults in the Room, 504
Adventure in Diamonds, 191
The Adventures of Barry McKenzie, 610
Adventures of Juan Quin Quin, 479
The Adventures of Kathlyn, 50
The Adventures of Oktyabrina, 109
The Adventures of Pluto Nash, 654
The Adventures of Prince Achmed, 153, 280
The Adventures of Robin Hood, 193
Advise and Consent, 296, 307
"Aesop's Fables," 143
The Affair, 414
L' Affaire est dans le sac ("It's in the Bag"), 248–249, 255, 262
L'Affiche ("The Poster"), 75, 82
Afghanistan, 591–592
Afgrunden ("Downfall"), 25, 34, 60
af Klercker, Georg, 53–54
Afolayan, Kunle, 585
Africa, 466–488, 580–581
  1990s, 583–586
  North Africa, 581–582
  sub-Saharan Africa, 582–583
African Americans
  The Birth of a Nation and, 62–63, 141
  blaxploitation, 471
  as directors, 140–142, 459, 471, 661–663, 668, 670–671, 676
  Hallelujah! and, 142, 173–174
  late silent era, 140–142
African Film Heritage Project, 344
Afrique sur Seine ("Africa on the Seine"), 486
After Life, 626
After One Hundred Years, 37
After the Rehearsal, 369
After the Wedding, 550
L'Age d'or ("The Age of Gold"), 156, 248, 279, 364, 367
Agee, James, 421
The Age of Daydreaming, 386, 412
The Age of Innocence, 470
The Age of the Medici, 323
Agnus Dei, 502
L'Agonie des aigles ("The Agony of the Eagles"), 73
Aguirre, the Wrath of God, 560
Ahlaam ("Dreams"), 592
Ahwesh, Peggy, 536, 541
Ah Ying, 629
A.I.: Artificial Intelligence, 465, 702
AIP. *See* American International Pictures
Air Force, 206
Airplane!, 469, 656
Airport, 460
Ajantrik (Pathetic Fallacy), 361
Akerman, Chantal, 503, 505, 534, 557–558, 564
Akin, Fatih, 689
Akira, 624
Akira Kurosawa's Dreams, 373
Akitsu Springs, 414
Aladdin, 658
Alam Ara ("Beauty of the World"), 224
Albert, Barbara, 557, 559
Alcoriza, Luis, 478
Aldrich, Robert, 308, 397, 456
Alessandrini, Goffredo, 243
Alexander Nevsky, 234
Alexandria, Why?, 587
Alexandrov, Grigori, 178, 233, 349
Alexëieff, Alexandre, 280, 440
Alex in Wonderland, 459
Alfie, 400, 455–456
Alfredson, Tomas, 656
Algeria, 581–582
Algol, 88, 90
Ali, 663
Alibaba Group, 715, 716
"Alice Comedies," 143
Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More, 469
Alice in the Cities, 561
Alice in the Wooly West, 143
Alice in Wonderland (1951), 292
Alice in Wonderland (2010), 651, 666, 707
Alice's Restaurant, 456
Alien (1979), 471
Alien (1992), 710
Alien: Covenant, 612
Alien vs. Predator, 717

All about Eve, 307
All About My Mother, 553
The All-Around Reduced Personality: Redupers, 558
Allégret, Marc, 250, 252, 259
Alleman (Everyman), 422
Allen, Paul G., 675
Allen, Woody, 458–459, 461–462, 469, 664, 668, 671
The Alley, 635
Allied Artists, 470
Allonsanfan, 506
Allouache, Merzak, 584
All Quiet on the Western Front, 192, 206
All That Heaven Allows, 301
Alma's Champion, 38
Almendras, Alejandro Fernández, 597
Almodóvar, Pedro, 526, 553
Aloïse, 507
Alone, 110, 178–179
Alone with Her, 708
Alonzo, John A., 457
Alps, 555
Al-Qadissa, 592
Altair, 534
Altman, Robert, 457–459, 461–462, 469, 556, 659, 664, 668, 672, 701
Alvarez, Santiago, 479
Always, 465
Les Amants du Pont-Neuf ("The Lovers of the Pont-Neuf"), 561
Les Amants réguliers ("Regular Lovers"), 550
Amarcord, 374–375, 506
A Matter of Life and Death (aka *Stairway to Heaven*), 340–341
The Amazing Spider-Man, 674
Amazon, 647, 676, 692, 698, 712, 714–716
Amblin Entertainment, 466, 682
Ambrosio company, 24–25
Ambush, 491
Amélie, 546, 563
America, 129
American Beauty, 646
American Biograph, 40, 45, 62
American Buffalo, 668
American Factory, 526, 715
American Falls, 532
American Gigolo, 379
American Graffiti, 462, 464–465
American Hustle, 470
American International Pictures (AIP), 297, 463, 470, 471
American Movie, 525
American Multi Cinemas (AMC), 677, 685, 688
American Mutoscope & Biograph (AM&B), 18–19, 27–28, 40, 528
American Mutoscope Company, 10–11, 18
American Pie, 657
American Pimp, 522
American Sniper, 469, 652
An American Tail, 658
An American Tragedy, 197
American Zoetrope, 464
Amok, 581
Among People, 233
El Amor brujo ("Love, the Magician"), 549
L'Amore (Love), 316
L'Amore in città (Love in the City), 316
Amores Perros, 599–600, 664
Amour, 566
L'Amour chante ("Singing Love"), 180
L' Amour fou, 393
Amphitryon, 240
Amsterdam Global Village, 539
An Angel at My Table, 613
Anatomy of a Murder, 296
Der Andere ("The Other"), 47
Anderson, Lindsay, 400, 423, 505
Anderson, Paul Thomas, 672, 705
Anderson, Wes, 669, 705
Andersson, Roy, 566
And God Created Woman, 294
And Life Goes On, 590
Andrei Rublev, 403–404, 492, 573
Andy Hardy series, 187
Andy Warhol's Frankenstein, 526
Aneinikov, Gleb, 534
Aneinikov, Igor, 534
An Elephant Sitting Still, 640
Anémic cinéma, 154–155, 435
Angel Hotel, 615
Angelopoulos, Theo, 377, 502–503, 554, 556
Angels with Dirty Faces, 204
Anger, Kenneth, 438–439, 441, 445, 448–449, 541–542
Les Anges du péché ("Angels of Sin"), 261, 263, 377, 379
Animal House, 656
Animal Logic (firm), 612
animation
  abstract, 152–153, 158, 281, 436–437
  CGI and, 617, 639, 650–651, 698–700, 705–707, 719
  3D, 617, 707
  documentaries, 538, 707
  Eastern Europe, 352, 436, 440–441
  experimental, 280–282, 339–441, 436–437, 519, 526
  Hollywood studios and, 207–208, 292, 454, 457, 466, 646–648, 650–651, 658, 669, 681, 683, 716
  silent era, 31–32, 66, 152–153
  television and, 292, 546–547
anime, 624–626, 640
Anna, 569
Anna Boleyn, 87
Annie, 654
Annie Hall, 461
Anonimatograph, 530
An Optical Poem, 281
Anstey, Edgar, 273
Antal, Nimród, 570
Antichrist, 688
Anticipation of the Night, 442, 536
Antoine, André, 74
Antoine et Antoinette, 335
Antonia, 497
Antonio das Mortes (O Dragão da maldade contra o santo geurreiro), 418
Antonioni, Michelangelo, 244, 314–316, 323–325, 366, 375–377, 379–380, 390, 394, 396, 409, 412, 459–460, 479–481, 502, 506, 554–555, 564, 673
Antz, 646, 706
Any Given Sunday, 663
Any Way the Wind Blows, 556
Any Which Way But Loose, 469
Aparajito ("The Undefeated"), 362, 382–383
Apart from You, 217
The Apartment, 304
Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 615–616
Apocalypse Now, 463–464, 659
Applause, 171, 198
Applause company, 685
Apple, 647, 698, 700, 715–716
The Apple, 590
The Apple Game, 568
Aprile ("April"), 549
Apted, Michael, 517
Apu trilogy, 619
Aquaman, 674
Aquarius, 596
Arabesque, 157
Arau, Alfonso, 599
Arbitrage, 714
Archangel, 533
The Archers company, 215, 340, 342
Arch of Triumph, 329
Are We There Yet?, 662
L'Argent ("Money"), 75, 84, 96

L'Argent (1983), 377
Argentina, 67, 284, 344, 362–363, 477, 482–484, 593–594, 596–597, 600, 602
Argosy Pictures, 296
Ariel, 552
Arigoto-San (Mr. Thank You), 218
Arkoff, Sam, 297
L'Arlésienne, 74
Armageddon, 652, 660
Armat, Thomas, 10
Armour of God, 629
Armstrong, Gillian, 610–611
Army, 347–348
Arnstam, Leo, 235
Arnulf Rainer, 436–437
Around the World in 80 Days, 295
Arrabal, Fernando, 501
Arriflex, 312–313, 427, 457
Arrival, 659
The Arrival of a Train at la Ciotat Station, 33
Arroseur arrosé, 9, 11
Arsenal, 110–112, 117
Arslan, Thomas, 555
art cinema, 151, 158–159, 278, 284, 293–294, 363, 388, 390, 405–406, 419, 431, 479–480, 483, 505–507, 553–559, 561, 564–565, 567, 602–607, 618, 635, 672–673
  American, 458–460
  authorship and, 366–384
  European, 313–315
ARTE, 547
Arteta, Miguel, 700
Arthur Christmas, 547
The Artist, 692
The Artist's Dream, 66
Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed, 508–509
The Art of Vision, 443
Art Theater Guild (ATG), Japan, 622
art theatres, 83, 151, 157, 278, 293, 312, 342, 386, 400, 436, 567, 635
Asanova, Dinara, 572
The Ascent, 573
Ashes, 405
Ashes and Diamonds, 354–355, 388
Ashes of Time, 630
Ashik Kerib, 574
Ash is Purest White, 638
Ashma, 357
Asian Film Festival, 344
Askoldov, Alexander, 403
Asmaa, 588
The Asphalt Jungle, 299
Asquith, Anthony, 148
Assa, 574
The Assassin, 620
L'Assassinat du Père Noël ("The Murder of Santa Claus"), 262
The Assassination of the Duc de Guise, 24, 29
Assault on Precinct 13, 458, 467
Assayas, Olivier, 550
The Associated British Picture Corporation, 339
Associated Talking Pictures, 210–211, 213–214
Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN), 615, 685
L'Assommoir, 41
Assunta Spina, 48, 60
As Tears Go By, 630
Aster, Ari, 676
Asthenic Syndrome, 575
Astruc, Alexandre, 334–335, 365, 394, 443
Asya's Happiness, 403
L' Atalante, 249–250, 255
Ataman, Kutlig, 689
At Five in the Afternoon, 591
At Land, 433, 438
Atlantic, 183
Atlantics, 584
Atlântida, 362, 418
L'Atlantide, 74
Atlantis, 44, 52
Atomic Blonde, 661
The Atomic Cafe, 518–520
Atonement, 661
AT&T, 647, 677, 716
Attack!, 308
Attack of the Clones, 697
Attack of the Crab Monsters, 297
Attica, 497
Attile, Martina, 537
A24 company, 675, 676
L'Auberge rouge ("The Red Inn"), 75
Aubert company, 146
Aubert, Louis, 146
Audiard, Jacques, 690
Audition, 623–624
Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska ("Till We Meet Again, Franziska "), 241
Die Augen der Mumie Ma ("The Eyes of the Mummy Ma"), 87
augmented reality (AR), 718–719
August, Bille, 548
Au Hasard Balthasar ("At Random Balthasar"), 377, 379
Aurenche, Jean, 330
Une Aussi longue absence, 395
Die Austernprinzessin ("The Oyster Princess"), 87
Australia, 45, 67, 610–613
Australia, 612
Australian Film Commission (AFC), 610
Austria, 75, 96, 211, 241, 437, 557, 559
Autant-Lara, Claude, 330
auteurism, 284, 306, 365–368, 379, 389, 394, 409, 417, 423, 459, 621–622, 669
Autorenfilm, 46–47
An Autumn Afternoon, 347
Autumn Fire, 278
Autumn Tale, 550
Avatar, 614, 654, 664, 701, 704–705, 707, 719
Avatar series, 647, 651
Avdeyenko, Y, 277
The Avengers, 651
Avengers series, 578, 639, 650, 681
The Avenging Conscience, 62
Avery, Tex, 208, 292
The Aviator, 470
Avildsen, John G., 462
L' Avventura ("The Adventure"), 375–377, 394
Awaara ("The Vagabond"), 359–360
Ayula, Miguel, 601

B

Baahubali: The Beginning, 606
Baahubali 2: The Conclusion, 607, 689
The Babadook, 612
Babe, 611
Babel, 659, 664
Babenco, Hector, 594, 595
Babe: Pig in the City, 612
Baby Doll, 305
Baby Face, 188
Back and Forth, 529
The Back-Breaking Leaf, 428
Backstage/Frontstage, 355
Backstairs, 92–93
Back Street, 188
Back to God's Country, 67–68
Back to the Future, 466, 653–655, 659
Bacon, Lloyd, 175, 201
The Bad and the Beautiful, 300
Bad Boys, 415
Bad Day at Black Rock, 290
Badger, Clarence, 131
Bad Guy, 633
Badham, John, 462
Badlands, 458, 672
The Bad Sleep Well, 371
Bad Timing: A Sensual Obsession, 554

Bahrani, Ramin, 670, 689
Baidu, 640, 715, 716
Baie des anges ("Bay of Angels"), 393
Baillie, Bruce, 441, 443, 445
Baise-moi, 566
Bakshi, Ralph, 457
Le Bal ("The Ball"), 549
Balaban, Barney, 186
Balaban & Katz, 123–124
Balance, 492
Balcon, Michael, 212–213, 341, 342
Baldwin, Craig, 534
Ballad of a Soldier, 350–351
Ballad of Narayama, 622
Ballast, 670
Ballet mécanique, 153, 156–157
Ball of Fire, 200, 202
Baltic Deputy, 231–232
Bambi, 207, 625
Bananas, 461
Il Bandito ("The Bandit"), 316
Bandit Queen, 604
The Band's Visit, 587
The Band Wagon, 300–301
Bangkok Dangerous, 615
Baober in Love, 638
Barbara, 555
Barbera, Joseph, 292
Barbershop, 662, 670
Barclay, Barry, 613
Bardem, Juan Antonio, 325–326
The Barefoot Contessa, 298, 307
Bariwali, 607
The Barkleys of Broadway, 301
Barmak, Siddiq, 592
Barnet, Boris, 109–110, 119
Barney, Matthew, 542
Barocco, 561
Baroncelli, Jacques de, 156
Barrandov Studio, 568
Barravento ("The Turning Wind"), 416
Barré, Raoul, 66
Barretto, Bruno, 594
Barrier, 405
The Bartered Bride, 177
Bartosch, Berthold, 280
Baruchello, Gianfranco, 449
Basic Training, 515
Batang West Side, 617
Batman (1989), 653, 666, 681
Batman Begins, 650, 665, 674
Batman Forever, 662
Batman franchise (1989-1997), 650
Battlefield Earth, 654
Battle in Heaven, 599
Battle of Algiers, 396
The Battle of Britain, 274, 454
The Battle of Chile, 485, 520
The Battle of China, 274
The Battle of Midway, 206, 274
The Battle of Russia, 274
The Battle of San Pietro, 275
Battle Royale, 624
Battleship, 649, 654
The Battleship Potemkin, 106, 107, 109–116, 118–120, 147, 233, 237, 267, 271, 351, 481–482, 498
Bauer, Evgenii, 49, 102
Bava, Mario, 398
Bavaria company, 237
Bay, Michael, 663
Bazin, André, 319, 320, 328, 333, 365–366, 374, 391, 392
BBC. *See* British Broadcasting Corporation
Beach Blanket Bingo, 453
Beasts of the Southern Wild, 670
Beat the Devil, 296
Beaumont, Harry, 171
Beauregard, George de, 396
Le Beau Serge, 389, 390
A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood, 662
A Beautiful Mind, 658
The Beautiful Washing Machine, 614
Beau Travail ("Nice Work"), 559, 563
Beauty and the Beast (1945), 334
Beauty and the Beast (1991), 658
Beavers, Robert, 532
Becker, Jacques, 257, 334
Becky Sharp, 193
Beetlejuice, 97, 666
Before Stonewall, 517
Before the Devil Knows You're Dead, 705
Before the Revolution, 397–398
Beginning of an Unknown Era, 403
Begone Dull Care, 436
Behind the Lines, 172–173
Beijing Bastards, 636
Beijing Culture, 640
Beijing Film Academy, 635
Beijing Film Studio, 635
Beineix, Jean-Jacques, 561–562
Bekmambetov, Timur, 576, 681
Belfast, Maine, 515
Belgium, 145, 165, 267–268
Belle de jour, 367, 368
La Belle équipe ("The Glorious Team," *They Were Five*), 259–260
La Belle Nivernaise ("The Beautiful Nivernaise"), 75
La Belle noiseuse ("The Beautiful Flirt"), 562
Belle of the Nineties, 189
Bellissima ("The Most Beautiful"), 316
Bellocchio, Marco, 396
Bells of Atlantis, 438–439
Belson, Jordan, 436
Belvaux, Lucas, 556
Bemberg, María Luisa, 596
Ben Barka, Souheil, 581
Bend It Like Beckham, 689–690
Beneath Clouds, 612
Benegal, Shyam, 603
Ben-Hur (1926), 130–131
Ben-Hur (1959), 290, 302–303
Ben Hur (2016), 576, 654
Benning, James, 535, 542
Benny's Video, 566
Benoît-Lévy, Jean, 252
Beowulf, 665
Beresford, Bruce, 610
Bergman, Ingmar, 314, 322–323, 338, 353, 363, 366, 368–371, 374, 379, 390, 402, 412, 459, 461, 479, 610, 635
Berkeley, Busby, 187, 192, 198, 201
Berlanga, Luis Garcia, 325
Berlin Alexanderplatz (1931), 97
Berlin: die Sinfonie der Grossstadt (Berlin, Symphony of a Great City), 158
Berlin Film Festival, 508, 568, 592, 596–597, 625, 691
Berlin's World Cinema Fund, 692
Bernal, Ishmael, 616
Bernard, Raymond, 73, 74
Bernhardt, Curtis, 251
Bertolucci, Bernardo, 397, 505–506, 545, 548
Besson, Luc, 549, 561–562, 686
Best Boy, 514
Best Intentions, 548
The Best Years of Our Lives, 303–304
Be There or Be Square, 637
A Better Tomorrow, 629
Between, 536
Beyond the Clouds, 376
Beyond the Valley of the Dolls, 471
Beyond the Years, 632
Bezhin Meadow, 231, 233, 577
Bezos, Jeff, 714
The BFG, 707
BFI. *See* British Film Institute
Bhaji on the Beach, 689–690
Bhandarkar, Madhur, 607
Bhatwadekar, Harishchandra Sakharam, 21
Bhuvan Shome, 476, 603
Bianco e nero ("White and Black"), 242
Biberman, Herbert, 297

Les Bicots-négres, vos voisins ("The Dirty Negroes, Your Neighbors"), 488
Bicycle Thieves, 293, 316–319, 325–326, 367, 372, 376, 382, 392, 397–398, 658
Bielinsky, Fabián, 593
*À bientôt j'espèr*e ("Soon, I Hope"), 496
Bier, Susanne, 550
Big, 662
Bi Gan, 640
Bigana, 592
Big Bang Love, Juvenile A, 624
Big Blue, 561
The Big Boss (aka *Fists of Fury*), 627
The Big Chill, 662
The Big Country, 296, 300
Big Deal on Madonna Street, 322
Bigelow, Kathryn, 662
Big Eyes, 666
Big Fish, 666
Big Five, 170–171, 186–187, 287–288. *See also* Majors; MGM; Paramount; RKO; 20th Century-Fox; Warner Bros
The Big Heat, 302, 304–305
Big Hero 6, 651
The Big Lebowski, 663
The Big Parade, 130–131
The Big Swallow, 16–17
Bike Boy, 447
Billy Jack, 471
Bioscop system, 8
BIP. *See* British International Pictures
Bird, 469
Bird, Brad, 662
Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance), 664, 708
The Birds, 306
Birdsong, 564
Birri, Fernando, 362–363, 482, 601
The Birth of a Nation, 62–63, 115, 129, 141, 295
Bitter Lake, 526
Bitter Laughter, 634–635
Bitter Rice, 316–317, 319
The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant, 509–510
Bitzer, Billy, 62–63
Bla Bla Bla, 419
Blaché, Alice Guy, 13, 23, 28
Black, 616
The Blackboard Jungle, 307
Blackboards, 590
The Black Box, 535
The Black Cannon Incident, 635
The Black Cauldron, 454
Blackfish, 521
Black Friday, 606
Black Girl (La Noire de . . .), 487–488
Black God, White Devil, 416–418
BlacKKKlansman, 663
Blackmail, 181–182, 212
Black Narcissus, 341
Black Panther, 662, 694
Black Peter, 387, 406
The Black Pirate, 132
Black Sabbath, 398
Black Swan, 671
Blackton, J. Stuart, 18–19, 31
Blacktop, 436
Blade, 660
The Blade, 630
Blade II, 600, 667
Blade Runner, 562, 656, 659, 693
The Blair Witch Project, 656, 674, 702, 708
Blaise Pascal, 323
Blasetti, Alessandro, 164, 244–245, 322
Blazing Saddles, 469
Bleak Moments, 551
Blier, Bertrand, 549
Blind Chance, 569
Blind Child 1, 539
Blind Husbands, 125, 129–130
Blindness, 596
Blind Shaft, 638
Blinkity Blank, 436
Blissfully Yours, 615
Blithe Spirit, 215, 342
block booking, 57, 123, 224, 287–288, 310, 683
blockbusters, 130–131, 453, 463, 466–467, 572, 578, 605–606, 615, 626, 631, 639, 642, 644, 647, 649, 652–655, 658, 664–666, 674, 688–689, 700, 717
Blom, August, 44, 52
Blomkamp, Neill, 584
Blonde Venus, 196
Blood and Black Lace, 398
Blood and Fire, 428
Blood and Sand, 128
The Blood and the Rain, 598
Blood Diamond, 584
Blood Feast, 471
Blood of a Poet, 279, 335, 433, 438
Blood of the Condor, 485–486
Blood Simple, 663, 668
Blood Wedding, 549
The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros, 617
The Blossoming Port, 347
The Blot, 64
Blow-Out, 377
Blow-Up, 375–377, 460, 555
Blue, 569
The Blue Angel, 177–178, 183, 196
The Blue Bird, 63
Blue Collar, 458
Blue Is the Warmest Color, 552, 581
The Blue Kite, 636, 638
The Blue Lamp, 341, 342
The Blue Light, 238
Blue Velvet, 669, 693
Blumhouse Productions, 676
Blu-ray, 525, 693, 712–713, 720
Bluth, Don, 658
Boat People, 629
Bobby, 672
Bobby Bumps and His Goatmobile, 66
Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice, 456
Bob le flambeur, 335–336
Bodard, Mag, 396
Body and Soul, 141–142
Body Heat, 657
Boe, Cristoffer, 555
Boese, Carl, 86, 88
Boetticher, Budd, 301
Bogart, Humphrey, 296, 390
Bogdanovich, Peter, 458, 471
Bognar, Steven, 526
La Bohème, 129, 536
Boiling Point, 623
"Boireau" series, 23
Boleslavsky, Richard, 174
Bolt, 704
Bolweiser, 552
Bombay, 604–605
Bombay Talkies company, 224–225, 358, 604
Bondarchuk, Sergei, 350, 404
Bong Joon-ho, 633–634
Bonjour Tristesse, 291, 390
Les Bonnes femmes, 390
Bonnie and Clyde, 454–456
Boogie Nights, 672
Borat, 652
Borden, Lizzie, 537, 668
Borderline, 160
Border Street, 352
Borinage, 268–269
Born in Flames, 537
Born of the Wind, 445
Born on the Fourth of July, 663
Borom Sarret, 487, 488
Borowczyk, Walerian, 436
Borzage, Frank, 124, 135, 139–140, 195, 198, 226
Bose, Debaki, 224
The Bostonians, 668

Bost, Pierre, 330
Bouamari, Mohamed, 581
Boubou cravate, 582
Le Boucher ("The Butcher"), 390
Boudu sauvé des eaux (Boudu Saved from Drowning), 254
Boultenhouse, Charles, 441
Boulting, Roy, 275
Bound for Glory, 457
Bourke-White, Margaret, 266
The Bourne Ultimatum, 660–661
Bowling for Columbine, 522–523
Boy (1969), 500
Boy (2010), 614
Boyhood, 705
Boyle, Danny, 552–553
Boy Meets Girl, 561–562
Boys Don't Cry, 670
Boys' Night Out, 455
The Boy with Green Hair, 305
Boyz N the Hood, 662
Bragaglia, Anton, 152
Brainstorm, 708
Brakhage, Stan, 439, 441–445, 449, 526, 529, 532, 536–537, 541–542, 566
Bram Stoker's Dracula, 465, 656
Brandenburg Concertos, 281
Brandon, Thomas, 266
brand partnership, 653
Le Brasier ardent ("The Burning Brazier"), 75–76, 78–79
Brault, Michel, 429–430
Braunberger, Pierre, 396, 423
Brave, 706
Braveheart, 660
The Brave One, 286
The Brave Warrior, 417
Bray, John Randolph, 66
Brazil, 362–363, 386, 415–419, 475, 592–596
Bread and Chocolate, 548
Breaker Morant, 610
Breakfast, 529
The Breakfast Club, 656
Breaking the Waves, 686–688
Breaking with Old Ideas, 490
Breakup Buddies, 639
Breathless, 387–391, 459, 711
Brecht, Bertolt, 97, 237, 257, 267, 286, 305, 485, 498–499, 501–503
Breer, Robert, 436–437, 444
Breillat, Catherine, 559, 566
Bresson, Robert, 261, 263, 315, 366, 374, 377–379, 401–402, 494, 503, 564, 603, 667
The Bride of Frankenstein, 203
Bridesmaids, 657
The Bride Talks in Her Sleep, 217
The Bridge, 158, 268
The Bridge on the River Kwai, 302
Bridges Go Round, 436
Bridget Jones series, 686
Brief Encounter, 329, 339, 342
Brief Encounters, 404
A Brief History of Time, 524
Brigadoon, 301
A Brighter Summer Day, 619
Brighton School, 20
Bringing Up Baby, 202
Brink of Life, 370–371
British and Dominion, 210
British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 526, 546–547, 551
British Film Institute (BFI), 423, 531, 550–551, 555
British International Pictures (BIP), 181, 210
British Lion company, 339
British National Films, 211, 214
British Sounds, 499
Brittany Runs a Marathon, 714
Broadway, 139, 192
The Broadway Melody, 171, 200, 252
Brocka, Lino, 616–617
Brokeback Mountain, 620
Broken Arrow, 301
Broken Blossoms, 63, 126
Broken English: Three Songs by Marianne Faithful, 541
Bronco Billy, 469
A Bronx Morning, 278
The Brood, 471
Broodthaers, Marcel, 526
Brooks, Mel, 469
Brooks, Richard, 307
Brother, 575
A Brother and His Younger Sister, 222–223
Brothers, 550
Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family, 223
Broughton, James, 438, 442
Brown, Clarence, 64, 140
Browning, Tod, 135, 203
Brown, Karl, 136
Brown v. Board of Education, 285
Bruckheimer, Jerry, 653
Bruckman, Clyde, 134
Brumes d'automne ("Autumn Mists"), 75
Brunius, Jacques, 257
Brute Force, 305
B, Scott and Beth, 535
Bubble, 666
Buchs, José, 165
A Bucket of Blood, 297
Bucy, Matt, 541
Buddha Collapsed Out of Shame, 591
Buena Vista, 292, 593, 680
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, 576, 654
A Bug's Life, 706
Bujalski, Andrew, 675
Bulgaria, 351, 492, 566
Buñuel, Luis, 155–156, 248, 279, 314, 326, 330, 364, 367–368, 379, 424, 479, 501, 553, 555, 610
Burkina Faso, 486, 581, 583–584
The Burmese Harp, 348
Burnett, Charles, 670
Burnt by the Sun, 575, 577
Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus, 577
Burton, Tim, 97, 651, 666, 707
Busan International Film Festival, 632
Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, 456, 458
Bute, Mary Ellen, 281
The Butterfly Effect, 655
Bwana Devil, 292
Bye Bye Birdie, 301
Bye Bye Brazil, 594–595
Bykov, Rolan, 573
Byrne, David, 658

C

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, 87, 89–93, 96–97, 135, 146–148, 150, 159–160, 656
Cabin in the Sky, 198
Cabiria, 44, 48, 86, 95, 129
Caccia tragica (Fugitive), 316
Caché ("Hidden"), 555
Cacoyannis, Michael, 314
La caduta di Troia ("The Fall of Troy"), 24
Caesar and Cleopatra, 339
Café Lumière, 620
Cage, John, 420
Cahiers du cinéma, 328, 333, 365–366, 400, 423, 550
Cai Chusheng, 355
The Caiman, 549
Cairo '30, 476
Cairo 678, 588
Calabuch, 325
Calcutta '71, 603
California Split, 457
Calle Mayor (Main Street), 325–326
Calmettes, André, 24
Camelot, 301
Camera Buff, 569

The Cameraman, 134
camera movement, 48, 79, 92, 94, 131, 138, 181, 192, 313, 315, 337, 527, 565, 710, 717
Cameraperson, 525
cameras
  color and, 193, 288
  digital, 585, 663, 697–698, 700–702, 705–707, 710–711
  Direct Cinema and, 386, 427–428, 431, 477, 513–518, 566
  early sound era, 171–175, 177–178, 180–182, 192
  "free camera," 566, 570–571, 588, 606, 660, 672, 686–687
  inventions of, 4–10, 18, 27–28, 207, 289, 312, 386–387, 457, 704–705
  16 mm, 274–275, 425, 427–428, 431, 540
  35 mm, 288–291, 298, 312, 431, 457, 503, 700, 702
  70 mm, 288–290, 457
  silent era, 2, 11–16, 19–20, 23, 131
  Steadicam, 457, 566, 660, 708
  "unfastened camera," 94–95, 100, 138–140, 332
Camerini, Mario, 243
Cameron, James, 471, 614, 664–665, 701, 704, 707
Camicia nera ("Black Shirt"), 242
Camila, 596
Camille (1912), 30
Camille (1936), 198
Le Camion ("The Truck"), 558
Campanella, Juan José, 597
Camp de Thiaroye, 583
Campion, Jane, 613
Campo de' fiori ("Field of Flowers"), 243
Canada, 175, 215, 273, 278, 428–429, 495, 507, 531, 650, 680, 684
Canal Plus, 546, 548, 586, 680
Canal Zone, 515
Candid Eye, 428
Cannes Film Festival, 312, 325–326, 350, 353, 354, 362–364, 367, 374–375, 389, 394, 433, 472, 494, 548, 571, 573, 581–582, 584, 586, 590–591, 596, 598, 612–613, 616, 620, 630, 634, 636, 638, 663, 667, 686–687, 691–692, 719
Canoa, 598
Cantata, 409
Cantata de Chile, 601
A Canterbury Tale, 216
Canudo, Riccioto, 151
Canyon Cinema Cooperative, 432
Can You Ever Forgive Me?, 662
La Canzone dell'amore ("The Song of Love"), 243
Cape Fear (1991), 469
Capellani, Albert, 23, 40–42, 44, 136, 657
Cape No. 7, 621
Le Capital, 504
Capra, Frank, 134, 189, 201–202, 244, 274, 303, 372
Capricious Summer, 406, 490
The Captain, 639
Captain Marvel, 694
Captains Courageous, 193
Capturing the Friedmans, 522
Capus, Alfred, 36
Carandiru, 595
Caravaggio, 537, 562
Carax, Leos, 561–562
Carleton, William, 67
Carl Peters, 239
Carmen, 549
Carmen Comes Home, 345
Carmen Jones, 304
Carmina Burana, 501
Carnages, 557, 559
Le Carnaval des vérités ("Carnival of Truths"), 75
Carné, Marcel, 253, 255, 260, 262–263, 293–294, 329
Carnival in Flanders (La Kermesse héroïque), 250, 253, 255
Caro Diario (Dear Diary), 549–550
Carol, 670
Carolco, 646
Caro, Marc, 563
Caro, Niki, 614
Carousel, 301
Carousel-Animal Opera, 280
Carpenter, John, 458, 467–468, 471
Carrie, 468
Carroll, Lewis, 526
Carruth, Shane, 671
Cars franchise, 649, 706
The Cars That Ate Paris, 610
Cartier-Bresson, Henri, 422, 428
Cartoons in the Hotel, 66
Car Wash, 471
Casablanca, 166, 196, 237
Casanova, 374
Caserini, Mario, 48
Casino Royale, 568, 658
Casler, Herman, 10
Casque d'or ("Golden Cask"), 334–335
Cassandra Cat, 407
Cassavetes, John, 472, 566, 687
Castaing-Taylor, Lucien, 540
Castellani, Renato, 244
The Castle of Cagliostro, 625
Castle, William, 297
Castro Street, 445
The Cat and the Canary, 139, 203
Catch-22, 459, 468
Catelain, Jaque, 75
Catherine, 75
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 305
Cat People, 203
Cats, 654
Cavalcanti, Alberto, 157–158, 214, 273–274
Cavani, Liliana, 323
Cave of Forgotten Dreams, 525
Cayatte, André, 330
Cazals, Felipe, 598
Cedar, Joseph, 587
Ceddo ("Outsider"), 487–488, 583
Cedrón, Jorge, 483
Cedrón, Lucía, 593
cel animation, 66
The Celebration, 687, 700
The Cell, 657
Celluloid Dreams agency, 548, 692
Cemetery of Splendor, 616
censorship, 29, 46, 53, 125, 128, 168, 188–190, 216, 226, 260–262, 268, 294, 325, 350, 355–356, 418, 588, 603, 617–618, 622, 640
  Argentina, 484, 596
  The Birth of a Nation and, 63
  Brazil, 418
  China, 355–356, 634, 640
  Cuban film industry, 601
  Eastern Europe, 567–569
  gangster films and, 204
  India, 359, 603
  Iran, 589–592
  late silent era Hollywood, 125, 128
  MPAA and, 294
  Philippines film industry and, 617
  post World War I Germany, 86
  Prague Spring and, 490–491, 568
  Soviet Union, 231, 350, 403–404
  of Turkish film industry, 588
Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC), 618
Central Region, 529–530
Central Station, 595, 692
Centre National de la Cinématographie (CNC), 328–329, 418
Centro Sperimentale, 242, 244, 362, 479
The Century of the Self, 526

Ceremonies (aka *The Ceremony*), 500
Certain Women, 672
Certified Copy, 591
César, 252
Ceylan, Nuri Bilge, 589
CG animation, 705–706
Chabrol, Claude, 366, 389–390, 394, 483, 494
El Chacal de Nahueltoro (The Jackal of Nahueltoro), 484
Chadha, Gurinder, 689–690
Chahine, Youssef, 475–476, 587
The Chair, 427–428
chambara films, 163, 216, 346
Un Chambre en ville ("A Room in Town"), 561
Chandidas, 224
Chandralekha, 359
Chaney, Lon, 135
Chang, 161
Chang Cheh, 626
Chang Tso-chi, 618
Chan is Missing, 670
Chan, Jackie, 628–629, 639
Channel 4 (Great Britain), 546–547, 551, 554, 604
Chan, Peter, 630, 685
Un Chant d'amour ("Song of Love"), 439, 541
The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith, 610–611
Chapayev, 229–232
Chaplin, Charles, 23, 46, 52, 61, 65, 74, 125, 132–134, 136–137, 156–157, 189, 196–197, 219, 249, 303, 374, 379, 397
The Charcoal Maker, 581
Charell, Erik, 177–178
Charif, Mehdi, 689
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, 666, 698
Charmides, 439
Charulata, 382
The Chase, 298
Chasing Butterflies, 556
Le Chat dans le sac ("The Cat in the Bag"), 389
Chazelle, Damien, 671, 676
The Cheat, 61, 64
The Chelsea Girls, 447–448
Chenal, Pierre, 250
Cheng Bugao, 226
Chen Jue, 520
Chen Kaige, 635–637
Chen Kuo-fu, 618
Chéreau, Patrice, 566
The Chess Players, 382
Chiarini, Luigi, 244
Chiaurelli, Mikhail, 349
Chicken and Duck Talk, 628
Chicken Little, 704
Chicken Run, 547
Un Chien andalou ("An Andalusian Dog"), 156, 248, 279, 367–368, 433, 438
La Chienne ("The Bitch"), 254
Chikamatsu Monogatari (The Crucified Lovers), 347
Child, Abigail, 537
Childhood of Gorky, 233
The Children Are Watching Us, 245, 315
Children of Men, 600, 667
Children of Paradise, 253, 263–264, 293, 329–330
Children of the Beehive, 346
Children Only Once, 521
The Children's Jury, 280
The Children Were Watching, 427
Chile, 477, 484–485, 597–598
Chile Films, 485
Chile, The Obstinate Memory, 520
Chimes at Midnight, 305, 307
China, 2, 610, 615, 621, 631, 634–641, 677, 680, 684–685, 704, 707, 715–717
  Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and, 488–490
  Dalian Wanda Group, 685, 688
  multiplexing in, 685
  postwar era, 355–358
  private ownership in, 637, 685
  studio system, 225–227
  video piracy within, 692–693
China Express (aka *Blue Express*), 110, 116–117
China Film Group Corporation, 637
China Gate, 308
China Is Near, 396
China Strikes Back, 269
Chinatown, 457, 657
A Chinese Ghost Story, 629
Ching Siu-tung, 629
La Chinoise ("The Chinese Girl"), 391, 498–499
Chomette, Henri, 156–157, 541
Chomón, Segundo de, 31
Chow, Raymond, 627–628
Chow, Stephen, 631, 639–640
Christensen, Benjamin, 44, 52–53, 137, 149
Christmas on Earth, 445
chronic, 537
Chronicle, 656
Chronicle of a Disappearance, 587
The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach, 508–509
Chronicle of the Years of Embers, 582
The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian, 717
Chronique d'un été (Chronicle of a Summer), 427, 429, 430–431
Chuck and Buck, 700
Chu, Jon M., 670
Chukhrai, Grigori, 350–351, 403
Chungking Express, 630
Chunhyang, 632
The Churning, 603
La Chute de la maison Usher (The Fall of the House of Usher), 75, 148, 159–160
Chytilová, Vera, 388, 407, 491, 493, 568
El Cid, 453
Le Ciel est à vous ("The Sky Is Yours"), 261
La ciénaga ("The Swamp"), 597
Cigarette Girl of Mosselprom, 105
Cimino, Michael, 458, 463
Cinderella (1899), 15
Cinderella (1950), 292
Cinecittà studios, 242, 244, 315, 322, 396
Cinégraphic company, 75–76, 84
Cine Liberación, 483–485, 496
Ciné-Liberté, 259
Cinema 16, 432
cinéma du look, 464, 561–562
Cinema Nôvo, 386, 415–419, 475, 478–479, 482–483, 490, 495, 497, 593, 595
Cinema Paradiso, 673
cinéma pur, 77, 84, 152, 156–157, 436, 443, 541
CinemaScope, 288, 290–291, 295, 300, 302, 305, 307, 457
Cinémas d'Art et d'Essai, 312
Cinémathèque Française, 328, 386, 397, 494
Cinématographe, 8–9, 12
cinéma vérité, 426, 429–432. *See also* Direct Cinema
Cineplex Odeon, 655
Cinerama, 288–289, 291
Cinéromans, 75, 84
Cines company, 24, 27, 241
Cinq minutes de cinéma pur ("Five Minutes of Pure Cinema"), 157
Cirano di Bergerac, 164
The Circle, 135
Circles, 281
The Circus, 133
Cissé, Souleymane, 583–584

Citizen Kane, 159, 187, 195–197, 199–200, 205, 298, 315, 328, 353, 397, 508, 568
Citizens Band, 659
Citron, Michelle, 536
The City, 270
The City Dweller, 361
City Girl, 139
City Lights, 196
City of God, 595
City of Gold, 423
City of Hope, 672
The City of Lost Children, 563
City of Sadness, 618, 619
City of Women, 374
The City Slicker, 65
city symphony genre, 157–159, 249, 268, 273, 278, 422
Civilization, 62
Claire's Knee, 392
Clair, René, 73–74, 153–154, 180–181, 200, 226, 247–249, 255, 331, 334, 505, 566
Clampett, Bob, 208, 292
The Clansman (Dixon), 63
Clarke, Alan, 546
Clarke, Shirley, 436, 444, 471, 496, 513–514, 520
Clash, 588
Clash of Egos, 565
Classe de lutte ("Class of Struggle"), 496
Class Relations, 553
Clayton, Jack, 399
Clement, Jemaine, 614
Clement, René, 330
Cléo from 5 to 7, 395, 571
Cleopatra, 453–454
Clerks, 673–674
Climates, 589
The Cloak, 110, 148–149
The Clock (2010), 542
A Clockwork Orange, 457
Closed Curtain, 591
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, 391, 462, 465, 467, 469, 471
Closely Watched Trains, 406, 490
Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), 631, 637
A Close Shave, 547
The Cloud-Capped Star, 361
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, 658
Clouzot, Henri-Georges, 261, 263, 330
Cloverfield, 656, 701, 708
The Clowns, 374
The Clown's Little Brother, 143
Clueless, 656, 662
CMPC. *See* Central Motion Picture Corporation
CNC. *See* Centre National de la Cinématographie
Coal Face, 273
The Cobweb, 304
Cocktail Molotov, 505
The Cocoanuts, 159
Cocteau, Jean, 262, 279, 314, 334–335, 366, 438–439, 537, 558
Code Inconnu ("Code Unknown"), 566
Coen, Ethan, 663–664
Coen, Joel, 663–664
Coeur fidèle ("Faithful Heart"), 75, 79–81
Cohabitation, 102
Cohl, Émile, 31, 66
Cohn, Harry, 188
COIC. *See* Comité d'Organisation de l'Industrie Cinématographique
Cold Mountain, 571
The Cold Summer of '53, 574
Collateral, 663, 705, 709
La Collectionneuse, 392
Collel, Judith, 557, 559
Collideoscope, 445
Colombia, 598
Colonel Blimp, 216
Colonel Redl, 569
color, 23, 33, 35. *See also* Technicolor
  color filmmaking, 23, 35, 192
  color grading, 699
Colorado Territory, 303
Colored Players, 141
The Color of Money, 470
The Color of Pomegranates, 493, 574
The Color Purple, 465
Colossal Youth, 553, 564
Colour Box, 281
Colpi, Henri, 395
Un Colpo di pistola ("A Pistol Shot"), 244
Columbia, 186, 188–189, 201, 207, 274, 287, 292–293, 296, 301, 305, 453, 462, 595, 600, 621, 644–646, 650, 680, 686
Comcast, 647, 677, 716
Come and See, 573–574
Come Back, Africa, 298
Come Drink with Me, 626–627
Comencini, Luigi, 316, 322
Comic-Con, 694
Coming Home, 637
Coming to America, 652
Comin' Thro' the Rye, 163–164
Comité d'Organisation de l'Industrie Cinématographique (COIC), 260–261
La Commare secca ("The Grim Reaper"), 397
Commedia all'italiana, 322
Commissar, 403, 574
Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt, 518
The Commuter, 657
Company, 607
compilation documentary, 421
Composition in Blue, 281
computer-generated imagery (CGI), 538, 637, 639, 699–701, 707
Comrades: Almost a Love Story, 630
Concerto pour un exil ("Concerto for an Exile"), 487
The Confession, 504
Confidence, 569, 659
Conflagration, 348
The Conformist, 506
Confusion, 381
conglomerate ownership of studios, 143, 454, 473, 645–647, 649, 680, 685
The Congress Dances, 177
The Conjuring, 668
The Connection, 471
Conner, Bruce, 441, 443– 444, 449, 501, 534, 541–542
Conquest of Paradise, 594
Conquest of the Pole, 15
Conrad in Quest of His Youth, 136
Consortium Interafricain de Distribution Cinématographique (CIDC), 581
The Constant Gardener, 596
Constantin company, 689
Construction, 269
Contempt, 388, 392
Continental company, 261–262, 264
continuity editing, 33, 36–39, 42, 58–60, 92, 100, 103, 112, 126, 172, 315, 387
  intensified continuity, 660–662
continuity script, 58–62
Control Room, 522
The Conversation, 377, 460, 464
Conversation Piece, 322
Coogan's Bluff, 469
Coogler, Ryan, 661–662
Cooley High, 471
Coolidge, Martha, 662
The Cool World, 471
Cooper, Merian, 161
Coppola, Francis Ford, 373, 377, 458, 460, 463–466, 469, 471, 561, 656
coproductions, 147, 312, 545, 548, 552, 557, 567, 575, 586–589, 593, 596–597, 604–605, 610, 637, 639, 681, 684, 685
Cops, 133

Copycat, 436, 657
Le Corbeau ("The Crow"), 261, 263–264, 330
Corleone, Michael, 467
Corman, Roger, 297, 471
Corneau, Alain, 550
Cornelius, Henry, 341
Cornell, Joseph, 279–280, 441–442, 501, 542
coronavirus outbreak, effects of, 676–677, 715, 717
Corpus Callosum, 532
Cortázar, Julio, 594
Cortez, Stanley, 195
Cosmic Ray, 441
Costa-Gavras, 504
Costa, Pedro, 553
Couch, 448
A Countess from Hong Kong, 303
The Country Doctor, 48
A Country without Good Sense!; or, Wake Up, My Good friends!!!, 496
Coup d'état, 414
The Courage of the People, 486
Cousin Cousine, 548
Les Cousins, 389–390, 394
Cousteau, Jacques, 421
The Covered Wagon, 135
Cover Girl, 201
Coward, Noel, 214, 339
Crab Trap, 598
Crainquebille, 75
The Cranes Are Flying, 345, 350– 351
Crank, 661, 718
Crash, 659
Crash Test Dummies, 557
Crazed Fruit, 412
The Crazy Family, 622
Crazy Rich Asians, 670
Crazy Stone, 638
The Created Surface of the Earth, 104
Creative Artists Agency (CAA), 463, 653
Creative Film Unit system, 353, 409, 492
Creature Comforts, 547
Creature from the Haunted Sea, 297
Creed, 661–662
Cremaster cycle, 542
Crichton, Charles, 341
Cries and Whispers, 369, 370
Crime and Punishment (1935, Josef von Sternberg), 197
Crime and Punishment (1935, Pierre Chenal), 250, 255
crime films, 657
The Crime of Monsieur Lange, 259
Crimes and Misdemeanors, 461
The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de La Cruz, 368–369
The Crimson Kimono, 308
Crimson Peak, 667
Crisis, 98
Crisp, Donald, 134
Criterion Collection, 714
Crockwell, Douglass, 436
Crocodile Dundee (1986), 611
Crocodile Dundee II (1988), 611
Cronaca di un amore (Story of a Love Affair), 316, 324–325, 375–376
Cronenberg, David, 471, 656
Cronos, 599, 667
Crooklyn, 663
Crosland, Alan, 170
crosscutting, 20, 36–37, 40, 58, 62, 115
Crossfire, 204, 298
Crossroad, 541
Crossroads (China), 227
Crossroads (Japan), 148
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, 615, 620, 627, 637, 688
Croupier, 549
The Crow, 660, 708
The Crowd, 131
Crown Film Unit, 275, 277
Crows and Sparrows, 356
Cruel Story of Youth, 412– 413
Crumb, 525
Cruze, James, 135
The Cry, 388, 406
Crying Ladies, 617
Cry, the Beloved Country, 584
Cuarón, Alfonso, 593, 599–600, 667, 681, 714
Cuarón, Jonas, 600
Cuba, 478–482, 601
Cuban, Mark, 675
Cuba Sí!, 425
La Cucaracha, 193
Cukor, George, 187, 189, 198, 201–202, 214, 301, 303– 304, 467
The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, 708, 710
Curro Vargas, 165
Curse of the Golden Flower, 688
Curtis, Adam, 526
Curtiz, Michael, 137, 166, 187, 204
Cutthroat Island, 654
The Cycle, 589
Cyrus, Miley, 704
Czech New Wave, 406–408
Czechoslovakia, 165, 284, 351–353, 440, 490–491, 504, 526, 567, 568
Czech Republic, 568. *See also* Czechoslovakia

D

Dadaism, 70, 83, 153–156, 435, 526
Dahl, Gustavo, 417
Daiei company, 221, 345–347
Daisies, 388, 407–408, 491
Dalian Wanda Group, 639–640, 685, 688
Dalí, Salvador, 156
Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne, 263, 377, 401
The Damned, 322
Damn You! The Mosquitoes, 569
Dancer in the Dark, 547, 686
The Dancing Girl of Izu, 217
Daneliuc, Mircea, 571
Dangal, 607
Dangan Runner, 622
D'Annunzio, Gabriellino, 164
Danse macabre, 156
Dansk Biografkompagni, 53
Dante, Joe, 655
Danton, 549
al-Daradji, Mohamed, 592
Dardenne, Jean-Pierre and Luc, 551–552
The Darjeeling Limited, 669
Dark Carnival, 535
Dark City, 612
Dark Eyes, 577
The Dark Knight, 665
The Dark Knight, 658, 681, 702
The Dark Knight Rises, 639, 652, 665, 705
Darkness and Light, 618
Dark Passage, 298
Dark Star, 458, 471
Darling, 400
Darnell, Eric, 719
Das Land ohne Frauen, 183
Dassin, Jules, 286, 305
Daughter Rite, 536
Daughters of Chaos, 536
Dauman, Anatole, 396, 423
DAU project, 577
David and Bathsheba, 301
David, Constantin J., 100
David Copperfield, 198
David Holzman's Diary, 513
Davies, Terence, 555–556
Davis, Peter, 497
Dawn Patrol (1930), 206
Dawn Patrol (1938), 206
Daydreaming, 541
The Day I Became a Woman, 590
A Day in November, 482
A Day in the Country, 255, 322
Day of Wrath, 293, 336–337
Days, 408
The Days, 636

The Days before Christmas, 428
Days of Being Wild, 630
Days of Heaven, 458, 672
Days of Water, 480, 482
Days of Youth, 219
The Day the Earth Stood Still, 302
Day Watch, 576
Dead Birds, 423
Dead End, 204
Deadlier than the Male, 331
The Deadly Companions, 301
The Deadman, 536
Dead or Alive, 623
Dealer, 555, 570
Dean, Basil, 210, 213
de Andrade, Joaquim Pedro, 416, 418
Dean, Tacita, 542
De Antonio, Emile, 422, 453, 497, 517–518
Dear Summer Sister, 500
Death by Hanging, 500
Death in the Land of Encantos, 617
Death in Venice, 322
Death of a Bureaucrat, 479–480
Death of a Cyclist, 325, 326
Death of a Salesman, 305
Death of Maria Malibran, 562
The Death of Mr. Lazarescu, 571
Debord, Guy, 435, 441
The Decalogue, 569
The Decalogue 1, 569
Decameron Nights, 146–147
Decembrists, 120
Decla-Bioscop, 88
Decla company, 88
Deep Canvas, 705
deep focus, 195, 199, 300
deep staging, 60–61
The Deer Hunter, 458
DEFA. *See* Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft
Defeat of the German Armies Near Moscow, 277
Défense de savoir ("Right to Know"), 504
The Defense of Madrid, 269
de Forest, Lee, 170
Degeneratsia, 577
de Heer, Rolf, 612
Déjà Vu, 655
Dekeukeleire, Charles, 160, 267–268, 437
Delannoy, Jean, 260
de Laurentiis, Dino, 322
De Leon, Mike, 616–617
del Giudice, Filippo, 214
Delicatessen, 563
Délits flagrants ("Misdemeanors"), 516
Delluc, Louis, 56, 75–77, 93, 146, 151
Del Toro, Guillermo, 599–600, 667
De Mesavonture van een fransch Heertje zonder Pantalon aan het Strand te Zandvoort, 42, 43
Demetrius and the Gladiators, 302
De Mille, Cecil B., 57, 61, 64, 97, 125, 128, 136, 186, 301–303, 465
de Mille, William C., 136
Demme, Jonathan, 458, 471, 513
Les Demoiselles de Rochefort, 393
Demy, Jacques, 393, 561
Deng Yimin, 634
Denham studio, 213
De Niro, Robert, 471
Denis, Claire, 559, 563
Denmark, 25, 52–53, 311, 336–338, 550
Deocampo, Nick, 520
De Palma, Brian, 367, 377, 458–459, 467–468, 471, 611, 664
Depardon, Raymond, 514, 516
Le Départ, 406
Departures, 626
Deren, Maya, 432–435, 438, 442, 519, 537, 539–542, 558
Les Dernières vacances ("The Last Vacation"), 334
Dersu Uzala, 372, 622
De Santis, Giuseppe, 244, 316, 342–343
Descartes, 323
Description of a Struggle, 425
Deserter, 110, 117, 120, 179
Desert Hearts, 670
Desert Victory, 275
De Sica, Vittorio, 243, 245, 293, 316–318, 325, 382, 397–398
Desierto, 600
Desire, 353
Despair, 552
Despentes, Virginie, 566
Desperately Seeking Susan, 668
Despicable Me, 649, 658
Desplechin, Arnold, 550
Destination Moon, 302
Destiny of a Man, 350
Détective (1985), 563
Detective Chinatown series, 639
Detroit, 675
Détruire dit-elle (Destroy, She Said), 558
Deutsche Bioscop, 88
Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA), 351
Deutsche Waffenschmieden ("German Armaments"), 277
Deutsche Wochenschau ("German Weekly"), 277
Les Deux gamines ("The Two Kids"), 73
Le Deuxième souffle ("Second Breath"), 335
Devdas, 225, 359
The Devil Probably, 377
The Devil's Backbone, 599
The Devil's Circus, 137– 138
The Devil's General, 315
Devils on the Doorstep, 636
The Devil's Wheel, 110, 231
The Devil Wears Prada, 656
De Vito, Danny, 662
The Devotion of Suspect X, 615
Dheepan, 690
Le Diable au corps ("Devil in the Flesh"), 329–330
Diab, Mohamed, 588
Les Diaboliques (Diabolique), 330
Diabolo Menthe, 505
Diagonal Symphony, 153, 436
Dial M for Murder, 292
Dialogue of Exiles, 485
Diamant-Berger, Henri, 72–73
Diamonds of the Night, 407
Diana l'affascinatrice ("Diana the Seductress"), 48
Diantong firm, 226
Diary for My Children, 569–570
Diary for My Father and Mother, 569
Diary for My Loves, 569
A Diary for Timothy, 276–277
Diary of a Chambermaid, 367
Diary of a Country Priest, 365, 377–378
Diary of a Mad Black Woman, 662
Diary of a Shinjuku Thief, 500
A Diary of Our Love, 222
diasporic cinema, 689–690
Diaz, Lav, 617
Dickinson, Thorold, 214
Dickson, W. K. L., 6–7, 10
Dick Tracy, 659
Dick, Vivienne, 535
Die Another Day, 613
Diegues, Carlos, 593–595
Die Hard, 653, 657, 659, 662
Dieudonné, Albert, 75
Difficult Loves series, 594
digital audio tape (DAT), 698
digital cameras, 700–701
Digital Cinema Distribution Coalition, 712
Digital Cinema Initiative (DCI), 703–705
Digital Cinema Package (DCP), 703, 712
digital convergence, 697–698, 703–709, 720

digital distribution, 709
  downloading *vs.* piracy, 713
  DVD, 712
  Internet and film culture, 712–713
  online distribution, 712–717
  streaming, 713–714
  to theaters, 712
digital filmmaking. *See also* digital tools
  CG animation, 705–706
  film form and style, 705–709
  and genres, 705
  narrative and style, 707–709
  3D filmmaking, 703–704, 707
digital intermediates (DIs), 699
  DI-based color grading, 699
digital sound, 698
digital stitching, 661
digital theaters, 703–704
digital tools, 698, 708
  computer-generated imagery, 699–700
  for 35mm shooting, 701
  nonlinear editing tools, 700
  postproduction, 699–700
  preproduction, 698–699
  previs techniques, 698
  publicity and marketing, 702
  shooting in digital, 700–701
Dikongue-Pipa, Jean-Pierre, 582
Diller, Barry, 463
Dillinger Is Dead, 505
Dil Se ("From the Heart"), 604
Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, 605
Un Dimanche à la campagne ("Sunday in the Country"), 550
Dimanche à Pekin (Sunday in Peking), 425
Dimensions of Dialogue, 526
Diner, 662
Dinesen, Robert, 25
Dinner at Eight, 187
Dinov, Todor, 492
Diop, Mati, 584
Direct Cinema, 387, 390, 406, 426–432, 513–516. *See also* cinéma vérité
  cameras, 386, 427–428, 431, 477, 513–518, 566
  Canada, 428–429
  Dogme 95 and, 687
  New Wave Czechoslovakia and, 406–407
  political filmmaking and, 496
Direzione Generale della Cinematografia, 242
Dirnentragödie ("Whore's Tragedy," *Tragedy of the Street*), 97
Dirty Dancing, 674
The Dirty Dozen, 456
Dirty Harry, 469
Disappearing Music for Face, 528
Discina company, 260
The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie, 367–368, 501
The Dish, 612
Disney, 292, 455, 463, 465, 644, 677, 680–681, 683, 715
  animated films, 142–143, 153, 187, 193, 207–208, 453–454, 650, 658, 683, 699, 704–706
  as modern entertainment corporation, 293, 463, 645, 646, 647, 648, 650–651, 654, 674, 705–706, 714–716
  3D versions of films, 704
  global activities, 681
  purchase of 21st Century Fox, 647, 651
  relationship with fans, 694
  video games and, 717
Disney+, 647, 651, 714
Disney Animation, 651
Disneyland, 293
Disney, Walt, 142, 143, 207–208, 292–293, 465
Disque 927, 157
Distant, 589
Distant Voices, Still Lives, 555
District 9, 584
District B13, 549
Diva, 561
Divergent series, 646
Divers at Work on the Wreck of the "Maine," 14–15
Divide and Conquer, 274
Divine Horsemen: The Voodoo Gods of Haiti (Deren), 434
Divine Intervention, 587
Divorce Italian Style, 322, 396
La Dixième symphonie ("The Tenth Symphony"), 75–76
Django Unchained, 669
Djeli ("Blood"), 582
Djigirr, Peter, 612
Dmytryk, Edward, 204
The Docks of New York, 136
Doctor Dolittle, 454
Doctor Strange, 705
Doctor Zhivago, 340, 401–402, 453
documentaries, 353, 420–432, 476, 513–526
  animated, 538
  digital media and, 707
  Direct Cinema, 513–516
  ethnographic, 425–426
  exotic, 161
  impact of video, 540–541
  late silent era, 161–162
  Latin America, 362, 478–479, 481–486
  meta-documentary, 518–519
  new technology for, 427
  personal, 421–423
  postwar era, 421–426
  techniques, 516–518
  television and, 421–422, 471, 513, 522, 540–541
  theatrical, 522, 525–526
  wartime, 274–277
Documentary Film School of Santa Fé in Argentina, 362
Dodes'kaden, 372–373
Dødsspring til Hest fra Cirkuskuplen ("Death Jump on Horseback from the Circus Dome"), 25–26
Dodsworth, 190
Dogme 95, 565, 577, 686–687, 700
Dog Star Man, 442–443
Dogtooth, 555
Dogville, 688
Dolan, Xavier, 708
Dolby Atmos sound system, 704
Dolby, Ray, 457, 659
La Dolce Vita ("The Sweet Life"), 374
Dolls, 626
Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands, 594
Doña Herlinda and Her Son, 599
Donaldson, Roger, 613–614
Donbass, 577
Donen, Stanley, 301
Donford-May, Mark, 584
Don Juan, 170
Don Juan et Faust ("Don Juan and Faust"), 75–76, 148
Donner, Richard, 467
Don Quixote (1933), 251
Don Quixote de la Mancha (1947), 325
Donskoi, Mark, 233, 235, 349
Don't Look Back, 428, 513
Don't Look Now, 554
El Dorado (1921), 75–76, 78–79, 82–83
El Dorado (1988), 549
Dörrie, Doris, 557
Dorsky, Nathaniel, 532
dos Santos, Nelson Pereira, 362, 416–417
Do The Right Thing, 663
Double Indemnity, 206, 298, 328
The Double Life of Véronique, 569
Doublier, Francis, 8
Douglas, Bill, 550
Douglas, John, 497
Douglas, Kirk, 286, 296
Le Doulos, 335
Douro, Faina Fluvial, 278, 562

Dovzhenko, Alexander, 109–112, 117, 232, 277, 349, 351, 386, 492, 575
Down by Law, 673
The Downfall of Osen, 220
downloading, 713
Downsizing, 675
Down with Love, 659
Dracula, 135, 139, 150, 188, 203
Dracula (aka *The Horror of Dracula*), 399
Draftee Daffy, 208
Dragnet Girl, 219
Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret No. 13, 152
Le Drame de Shanghaï ("Shanghai Drama"), 251
Drankov, A. O., 49, 102
Drankov company, 49, 103
The Draughtsman's Contract, 554–555
Drawn from Memory, 538
Dr. Bull, 197
Dreamed Path, 556
Dreaming Rivers, 537
The Dream Life of Angels, 551
The Dream of a Rarebit Fiend, 20
Dreams That Money Can Buy, 432
A Dream Walking, 207
DreamWorks Animation, 647, 658
DreamWorks SKG, 466, 547, 646, 706
Drei Unteroffiziere ("Three Petty Officers"), 240
Dressed to Kill, 467
Dressler, Marie, 187
Drew, Robert, 426–428
Dreyer, Carl, 92, 149–150, 279, 293–294, 336–337, 397, 401, 502, 564
The Dreyfus Affair, 14
Drifters, 271
Drinking Buddies, 671
drive-in theaters, 294
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 191, 198
Dr. Karn, 615
Dr. Kotnis, 359
Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler (Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler), 88, 92, 109, 176, 205
Drowning by Numbers, 555
Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb, 431
Drugstore Cowboy, 668
Drunken Angel, 372
Dry Lake, 414
A Dry White Season, 662
Duchamp, Marcel, 154, 435
Duck Soup, 186
Duck, You Sucker!, 504
Dudow, Slatan, 498, 501
Duel in the Sun, 300–301
Dulac, Germaine, 72, 74–78, 83–84, 155, 157, 259, 541, 558
Dumbo, 207, 651
Dumont, Bruno, 551–552, 566
Dune, 669
Dunham, Lena, 676
Dunkirk, 666, 705
Dupont, E. A., 94, 183
Duras, Marguerite, 395, 557–559
Dust in the Wind, 619
Dutta, Asha, 604
Dutt, Guru, 361, 476
DuVernay, Ava, 518, 674
Duvivier, Julien, 253, 259, 331
DVD (Digital Video Disc), 525–526, 540–542, 585, 607, 624, 631–632, 637, 645, 666, 675–676, 689, 692–693, 702, 712–714
  sales and rentals, 712
Dwan, Allan, 59
D-War, 688
The Dying Swan, 49
Dymling, Carl Anders, 337
Dynamic: 01, 713
Dzigan, Yefim, 231
Dziga-Vertov Group, 498–500

E

Eagle vs. Shark, 614
Ealing comedies, 341–342
Ealing Studios, 213, 341
Eames, Charles, 436
Eames, Ray, 436
Early Man, 547
Early Summer, 347–348
Earth, 110–111, 117
Earth Girls Are Easy, 655
East Germany, 310, 352
Eastman, George, 5
Eastman Kodak, 28, 126, 195, 427
East of Borneo, 279
East Palace West Palace, 636
Eastwood, Clint, 469, 664
Easy Rider, 455–456, 459
Eat, 446–447, 527
Eat Drink Man Woman, 620, 688
Ecaré, Desiré, 486–487, 583
Ecce Bombo, 549
Eccentricities of a Blonde-Haired Girl, 563
Éclair, 136
L'Eclisse (Eclipse), 375
L'Écran français, 328
Eddie, 427, 428
The Edge, 497
The Edge of Heaven, 689
Edge of the City, 308
The Edge of the World, 215
Edison Company, 19, 27, 45, 66
Edison Kinetoscope, 7–9
Edison's Vitascope, 10, 17
Edison, Thomas, 6–8, 10, 18–19, 27–28, 508
editing
  analytical, 37, 40
  continuity, 33, 36–39, 42, 58–60, 92, 100, 103, 112, 126, 172, 315, 387
  French Impressionism and, 80–81, 92
  German Expressionism, 91–92
  Kuleshov effect and, 104
  rhythmic, 81, 92, 114, 148, 156, 232
  Soviet Montage and, 112–116
  time-coded, 659
  on video, 659
Edward II, 537
Edward Scissorhands, 666
Edwards, Harry, 134
Ed Wood, 666
Effie Briest, 509
Eggeling, Viking, 152–153, 436
Eggers, Robert, 676
Eggert, Konstantin, 231
Egypt, 587–588
Egypte: Panorama des rives du Nil, 13
The Egyptian, 302
The Eiger Sanction, 469
8½, 374, 377, 388, 459, 462
The Eight-Diagram Pole Fighter, 628
1860, 242, 244
Eisenstein, Sergei, 107–113, 115, 117, 119–121, 178–179, 229, 231–233, 235–237, 278, 349, 351, 364, 366, 398, 419, 478, 481, 485, 498, 508, 574, 577
Eisimont, Victor, 235
Eisner, Michael, 463, 650
Elder, Bruce, 531
Electra, My Love, 502
electronic press kits (EPKs), 702
The Element of Crime, 555, 563
Elephant, 672
The Elephant Man, 669
11:14, 712
Elf, 652
Elite Squad, 596
Elizabeth, 604
Elizabeth and Mary, 428
Ellison, Megan, 675
El Mariachi, 674
Elmer Gantry, 307
Elstree studio, 181
Elton, Arthur, 273
El Topo ("The Mole"), 501
Emak Bakia, 155
Embrace of the Serpent, 598

Embrafilme, 593–594
The Emigrant, 587
Emitai ("God of Thunder"), 487
Emmerich, Roland, 681
The Emperor and the Assassin, 636
The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On, 516
Empire, 447
Empire of Passion, 622
Empire of the Sun, 465
The Empire Strikes Back, 466, 653, 694
The Employee, 509
Enamorada ("In Love"), 363
Encounters at the End of the World, 525
The End, 439
Endeavor agency, 653
End of August in the Hotel Ozone, 407
The End of St. Petersburg, 110–112, 117
Enemy of the People, 383
L'Enfant, 552
L'Enfant de Paris ("Child of Paris"), 44, 51–52
Les Enfants du paradis, 260
Les Enfants terribles, 335–336
engaged cinema, 495–497
Engel, Morris, 298
Engineer Prite's Project, 102–104
England. *See also* Great Britain
  early film production in, 26
  postwar era, 338–342
The English Patient, 668
Enoken as Kondo Isamu, 216–217
En passant ("In Passing"), 281
Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche (ENIC), 242
Enter the Dragon, 627
Enter the Matrix video game, 718
Enthusiasm, 162, 178
The Entity, 533
Entr'acte, 153–154, 438
Ephron, Nora, 662
Epstein, Jean, 74–76, 81–84, 148, 155–156
Epstein, Marie, 252
Epstein, Robert, 518
Equinox Flower, 347
ERA company, 241
Eraserhead, 458, 471, 668–669
Erdgeist ("Earth Spirit"), 88, 92
Erendira, 594
Ergüran, Deniz Gamze, 589
Erice, Victor, 550, 562
Erin Brockovich, 666
Eroica, 353–354
Eros, 376
Eros + Massacre, 414–415
Erotikon, 55
Ersatz, 440
Es, 386
Escape, 281
Escape from Japan, 414
Espinosa, Julio García, 479–480
Essanay company, 28, 30, 39, 65
Estorvo, 595
États Généraux du Cinéma (EGC), 494
Eternal Love, 97
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, 655, 674
L'Eternel retour ("The Eternal Return"), 260, 262
ethnographic cinema, 422–423
L'Étoile de mer, 155
E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial, 465, 653, 655, 682
Eurimages, 548, 684
Europa 51, 316, 323–324
Europa (aka *Zentropa*), 555
Europa Cinemas, 684
EuropaCorp, 549, 686, 688
European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, 684
European Film Academy, 548
Eustache, Jean, 551, 561
Evan Almighty, 654
Even Dwarfs Started Small, 560
Evergreen, 212
Every Day Except Christmas, 423
Every Man for Himself and God Against All (aka *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*), 560
Everyone Says I Love You, 671
Everything for Sale, 388
Evil Angels (aka *A Cry in the Dark*), 611
The Evil Dead, 668
Evolution of a Filipino Family, 617
Ewers, Hanns Heinz, 47
Der ewige Jude ("*The Eternal Jew*"), 239
exhibition, 655
  1930s, 190–191
  digital projection, 576, 703–704
  drive-in theaters and, 293–294
  early, 11–12, 17–18
  "Film Europe," 145–147, 151, 312
  multiplexing and megaplexing, 654–655
  patent infringement and, 28–29
  roadshowing, 294–295, 300–301, 453–454
  sound technology and, 167, 170–171, 175, 178, 180–183, 291, 457, 659, 704
Exiled (2006), 631
The Exiled (1980), 582
Ex Machina, 675, 705
Exodus, 286, 296, 457
The Exorcist, 462–463, 468, 471, 649
Expect the Unexpected, 631
experimental cinema, 151–152, 277–282, 334–335, 432–449, 526, 531–532
  abstract, 152–153, 278, 436
  animation, 152–153, 280, 538
  cinéma pur, 156–157
  compilation film, 441
  Dada-related production, 153–154
  lyrical, 157–159, 440–441
  narrative, 159–160, 278, 438–440
  underground films, 444–446
  video use in, 540–541
exploitation film, 297, 463, 468, 471, 535, 685
The Exploits of Elaine, 52
Explosion of a Motor Car, 16
expository titles, 34
Exquisite Corpses, 504
The Exterminating Angel, 364, 367
The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks, 106, 109– 110, 119
eyeline match, 38–39
Eyes of a Thief, 587
Eyes without a Face, 395

F

Faat Kine, 583
Fabiola, 322
Fables Pictures Inc., 143
Fábri, Zoltán, 352–353, 409
A Face in the Crowd, 305
Faces, 472
Faces of Women, 583
Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS), 109
Fahrenheit 9/11, 522–523, 646
Fairbanks, Douglas, 65, 125, 131–132, 657
Fairground, 311
Faits divers ("News Items"), 516
Fake Fruit Factory, 539–540
Falk, Feliks, 568
Fallen Angel (1945), 304
Fallen Angels (1995), 630
The Fallen Idol, 340
The Fall of Berlin, 349
The Fall of the Roman Empire, 454
The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty, 162
The Fall of Troy, 24, 30
The Falls, 535
El Familiar, 484
The Family Game, 622
Famous Players-Lasky, 57, 123, 125, 186
Fanny, 252, 259

Fanny and Alexander, 369, 462
Fantasmagorie, 31–32
Fantastic Mr. Fox, 669
Fantômas, 50
Farabi Cinema Foundation, 590
The Farewell, 670
Farewell Home Sweet Home, 556
Farewell My Concubine, 636
A Farewell to Arms, 195, 198
Farewell to Language, 711
Far from Heaven, 670
Far from Poland, 519
Far from Vietnam, 507, 510
Fargo, 663
Farhadi, Asghar, 591, 689
Farias, Roberto, 593
Farmanara, Bahman, 589
Farrebique, 421–422
The Far Shore, 507, 534
Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 509–510, 552–553, 559, 574, 670
Fast and Furious, 657, 715
Fast and Furry-ous, 292
Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control, 524
Faster Pussycat, Kill! Kill!, 471
Fast Food Nation, 659
Fast Times at Ridgemont High, 656, 662
Fata Morgana, 560–561
The Fate of the Furious, 602, 682
Fat Feet, 446
Fat Girl, 559
Father, 412
Father and Son, 629
Father Knows Best, 293
Father Sergius, 49, 102
Faust (1926), 88, 94–96
Faust (2011), 577
Favorites of the Moon, 556
The Favourite, 555
Favreau, Jon, 719
Faye, Safi, 581
Fear Eats the Soul, 509–510
Fédération Pan-Africaine des Cinéastes (FEPACI), 486, 581
Fehér, György, 570
Feige, Kevin, 694
Fei Mu, 355–356
Fejos, Paul, 138–139
Felix the Cat in Futuritzy, 144
Fellini, Federico, 316, 324–325, 366–367, 374–375, 379, 390, 396–397, 402, 407, 459, 461–462, 465, 479, 506, 555, 577, 594, 607, 635
Female Patriot, 553
Female Trouble, 472, 526
La Femme de nulle part ("The Woman from Nowhere"), 75
La Femme du boulanger (The Baker's Wife), 252
La Femme infidèle ("The Unfaithful Wife"), 390
Fences, 668
Feng Xiaogang, 637, 640, 708
Fernández, Emilio "El Indio," 363–364
Ferreri, Marco, 505
Fescourt, Henri, 73
Festival, 557, 559
A-list festivals, 691– 692
fêtes foraines, 13, 24
Feuillade, Louis, 13, 23, 50–51, 60, 73, 76, 395
Feu Mathias Pascal ("The Late Mathias Pascal"), 75–76, 78–80, 82–83
Feyder, Jacques, 74–75, 79, 156, 250, 253, 255, 259–260
Fiddler on the Roof, 457, 460
Field Diary, 516
Fierlinger, Paul, 538
Fièvre ("Fever"), 75–76
The Fifth Element, 686, 688, 700
Fifth Generation films, 634–636
55 Days at Peking, 307
Figgis, Mike, 700
Fight Club, 658, 675, 710
The Fight for Our Soviet Ukraine, 277
Fighting Film Album 6, 235
Fighting Film Album 8, 235
Figures of Wax, 526
Filho, Kleber Mendonça, 596
La Fille de l'eau ("The Daughter of the Water"), 75, 78–79
Film about a Woman Who ..., 534
Film Arts Guild of New York, 151
Film ASEAN, 615
Film Booking Office, 124–125, 171
Un Film comme les autres, 499
Film Company of Ireland, 67
Film Culture, 432
Film d'Art company, 24, 36, 76
Film Española, 165
Le Film est déjà commencé? ("Has the Film Already Started?"), 441
Film Europe, 145–147, 151, 548
film festivals, postwar era, 312–313
Film Finance Corporation (FFC), Australia, 611
Film Finance Corporation (FFC), India, 603
Filmfront, 266
Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc, 528
Film-Makers' Cooperative, 432
Film No. 4 (Bottoms), 528
film noir, 97, 204–206
Films Abel Gance, 75–76
Films Albatros, 75–76, 102
Les Films Jean Epstein, 75–76, 83–84
Film Socialisme, 711
Film Workshop, 629
Le Fils ("The Son"), 552
Final Cut Pro, 700
Final Destination, 668
Fin août, début septembre ("End of August, Beginning of September"), 550
Fincher, David, 675, 710
Finding Dory, 707
Finding Mr. Right, 639
Finding Nemo, 706
Finian's Rainbow, 464
Finis Terrae ("The End of the Earth"), 75, 83
Finye (The Wind), 583
Fire!, 20
The Firemen's Ball, 406–407, 491
Fires on the Plain, 348
Firestone, Cinda, 497
Fires Were Started, 276
Fireworks, 438–439, 448, 541
Fireworks Wednesday, 591
First Blood, 657
First Charge of the Machete, 480
The First Days, 276
First Name Carmen, 563
First National Exhibitors' Circuit, 57, 65, 93, 123–124, 132, 170, 186
Fischinger, Oskar, 281, 432
Fish and Cat, 708
A Fish Called Wanda, 342
Fish Story, 626
Fist Fight, 437
A Fistful of Dollars, 398
Fist of Fury (aka *The Chinese Connection*), 627
Fists in the Pocket, 396
Fitzhamon, Lewin, 37
Five Boys from Barska Street, 352–354
Five Easy Pieces, 458–459
5/62 Fenstergucker, Abfall, etc. ("5/62 Window Watchers, Garbage, Etc."), 437
Five Film Exercises, 281
(500) Days of Summer, 674
The Five Obstructions, 539, 688
Five Scouts, 222
Flags of Our Fathers, 469
Flaherty, Robert, 139, 161, 271–272, 420-421, 520, 538
Flaming Creatures, 445, 448–449
Flamme blanche ("White Flame"), 160, 268

Flashdance, 562, 653
Flash Gordon, 655
Fleischer, Dave, 142, 207–208
Fleischer, Max, 142, 207–208
Fleming, Victor, 201, 465
Flesh and the Devil, 140–141
Flesh of Morning, 442
Flieghauf, Benedek, 570
Flight of the Red Balloon, 620
Flirt, 673
Flirting with Disaster, 670
Floating Clouds, 346
Florey, Robert, 159
The Flower of My Secret, 553
Flowers and Trees, 193, 207
Flowers of Shanghai, 619
Flower Thief, 440
Flowing, 346
Flushed Away, 547
Fluttering Hearts, 134
Fluxfilms, 527–528
Fluxus group, 421, 435, 446
Fly, 528
The Fly (1958), 302
The Fly (1986), 656
Flying Down to Rio, 194–195
Fog Line, 528–530, 533
The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara, 524
La Folie du docteur Tube ("The Madness of Doctor Tube"), 76
A Folk Tale, 604
Following, 665
Follow the Fleet, 201
Folman, Ari, 538, 587
Fong, Allen, 629
Fool for Love, 461
Foolish Wives, 129–130
Footnote, 587
For a Few Dollars More, 398
Forbidden Games, 330
Forbidden Planet, 302
Ford, Aleksander, 352, 353
Ford, John, 64, 124, 126–127, 135, 139, 187, 189, 197, 204, 206, 274, 296, 303, 456
The Forest, 570
Forman, Miloš, 406–407, 482, 491
Formula 17, 620
Forrest Gump, 652, 665
Fort Apache, 303
Fortini/Cani, 509, 553
Fortissimo Films company, 692
48 HRS, 657
The Forty-First, 350
Forty Guns, 308
49th Parallel, 215
42nd Street, 201
Foster, Jodie, 662
"found-footage" horror film, 656
The Fountainhead, 303
Four Devils, 139
The Four Devils, 25
The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 128–129, 131
The 400 Blows, 389–391, 394, 399, 482
The Four Hundred Million, 269
4 Little Girls, 663
4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days, 571–572
Fournier, Marcel, 429
Four Nights of a Dreamer, 377–378
Four Seasons of Children, 218
Four Sons, 139
Four Steps in the Clouds, 244–246, 315
Fourteen Lives in Danger, 352
Four Walls, 539
Fox and His Friends, 509
Fox Film Corporation, 57, 65, 94, 96–97, 123–124, 135, 139, 143, 170, 182, 186, 462, 672. *See also* 20th Century Fox; 21st Century Fox
Fox Searchlight, 646, 674
Fox Studios Australia, 612
Foxtrot, 587
Fox, William, 27, 57
Foy, Bryan, 170
Frame, Janet, 613
Frampton, Hollis, 527, 529, 531, 535, 542
France, 22, 145, 147, 247–248, 311
  1910s, 51–52
  1920s, 71–84
  1930s, 248–259
  cinéma du look, 561–562
  cinéma pur, 156–157
  cinéma vérité, 429–432
  communism and, 256–260
  diasporic cinema and, 689–690
  Direct Cinema in, 429–432
  documentaries, 423–426
  early filmmaking and exhibition, 8–9, 12–13, 22–24
  early sound era, 179–180
  imports in, 71–72
  Left Bank group, 393–396
  New Wave and new cinema, 389–396
  Occupation period, 261–264
  Poetic Realism, 252–255
  Popular Front, 256–259
  postwar era, 327–335
  serials in, 50
  1970s-1980s, 545–547, 551
  Surrealism, 155–156
  Tradition of Quality, 329–330, 334
  Vichy regime, 260–261
  World War II occupation era, 261–264
Francesco, giullare de Dio ("Francesco, God's Juggler," aka *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*), 316, 323
Frances Ha, 671
franchises, 649–650, 652
Francia, Aldo, 484–485
Franco, Ricardo, 505
Franju, Georges, 334, 395, 424–425, 518
Frankenheimer, John, 308
Frankenstein, 139, 188, 203, 550
Frantz, 550
Freak Orlando, 563
Freaks, 135
Frears, Stephen, 546
Freddi, Luigi, 242, 244
Free Cinema, 423
Freed, Arthur, 198, 301
Free Radicals, 557, 559
Freeze, Die, Come to Life!, 575
Freleng, Isadore "Friz," 143, 208
French Cancan, 333
The French Connection, 460
French Impressionism, 70, 72, 74–84, 89, 92, 95, 112, 117, 138, 147–152, 155, 159–160, 262, 298, 313, 437–439, 630
French-Italian coproduction, 312
French New Wave (Nouvelle Vague), 389–393, 399–400, 406, 409, 456, 509, 687
Frenzy, 306
Frères, Alberts, 42
Les Frères corses (The Corsican Brothers), 74
The Freshman, 133
Freund, Karl, 203
Frida, 599
Friday, 662
Friedkin, William, 462
Friedman, Jeffrey, 518
Friedrich, Su, 537
A Friendly Marriage, 39
The Frighteners, 613
Fritz the Cat, 457
frock-coat films, 48
Froelic company, 237
From Here to Eternity, 287
Front-Line Girl Friends, 234, 235
Frozen, 651, 707
Frozen 2, 578
Frozen series, 706
The Fruit of Paradise, 491
Fruitvale Station, 662
Fudoh: The New Generation, 623

Fuentes, Carlos, 594
The Fugitive, 139
Fu Jie, 489
Fukasaku, Kinji, 624
Fuller, Samuel, 307–308
Full Frontal, 666, 702
The Funeral, 622
Funny Face, 301
Funny Ha Ha, 675
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, 456
Furious 7, 674, 708, 715
Furrows, 325
Fury, 194, 203–204
Fuses, 445–446

G

Gaal, István, 409
Gabbeh, 590
Gad, Urban, 25, 34
Galaxie, 441
La Galerie des monsters ("The Freak Show"), 75
Galileo, 305
Gallipoli, 610
Gallone, Carmine, 175
Gal Young 'Un, 472
The Gambler's Charm, 39
The Game, 675
Games Gamblers Play, 628
Games Women Play, 585
Gammon, Frank, 10
Gance, Abel, 74–76, 78–81, 84, 96, 148–149, 151, 242, 331, 372, 446
Ganda, Oumarou, 486, 582
Gandhi, 604
Gangs of New York, 470
Gangs of Wasseypur, 607
Garbo, Greta, 187, 197
Garcia, Nicole, 557, 559
The Garden of Allah, 193
The Garden of Delights, 505
Garden State, 675
Gardin, Viktor, 120
Gardner, Robert, 422–423
Garrard, Alf, 268
Garrel, Philippe, 550
Garrone, Matteo, 552
Gaslight (1940), 214, 672
Gaslight (1944), 214
The Gate of Heavenly Peace, 520
Gate of Hell, 346
Gates of Heaven, 524
Gatlif, Tony, 689
Gaumont-British, 210, 212–213, 272
Gaumont company, 13, 22–23, 27–28, 31, 49, 51, 72–73, 76, 136, 327, 329, 684
Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert, 84, 248
Gaumont, Léon, 13, 179
The Gauntlet, 469
Gav ("The Cow"), 589
gay and lesbian films, 670
Gay, Cesc, 556
Geffen, David, 466, 646
Die geheime Macht ("The Secret Force"), 99
Gehr, Ernie, 527–528, 532
Gemini Man, 708
gendai-geki films, 163
The General, 134
General Electric, 647, 685
General Film Company, 28
A Generation, 354
Genesis, 584
Genet, Jean, 439, 541
Genina, Augusto, 164
genres
  action and adventure, 657-658
  animated features, 658
  city-symphony, 157–159
  comedy, 64–65, 131–134, 198, 243–245, 341–342, 371–381, 467, 656–658
  comedy and crime, 656–657
  crime, 50, 135–136, 188–189, 204–206, 302, 647, 657–659, 686
  digital technology and, 705
  horror, 656
  science fiction, 655–656
  screwball, 201–202
  Western, 135, 300–301
Genroku Chushingura (aka *The Loyal Forty-Seven Ronin*), 223
Gentlemen's Agreement, 204
Gently Down the Stream, 537
Genuine, 88
Geography of the Body, 278
Georg, 448
Gerasimov, Sergei, 349
Gerima, Haile, 487
German, Alexei, 573–574, 577
German Expressionism, 70, 87–94, 112, 139, 146–151, 159, 175, 205, 298, 313, 390, 687
The German Sisters, 558
Germany, 145, 147, 310–311. *See also* German Expressionism
  1910s, 46–47
  1920s, 85–100
  early film production in, 26
  early sound era in, 175–178
  leftist filmmaking in, 267
  Nazis regime, 236–241
  postwar hostility, 145–146
  wartime documentaries, 277
  young cinema, 401–402
Germany in Autumn, 510
Germany Year Zero, 316, 319, 323
Germinal, 42, 44
Gertie, 31–32
Gertrud, 337, 564
Getino, Octavio, 483–484, 496
Get Out, 656, 676
Get Out of Here!, 486
Get Out Your Handkerchiefs, 550
The Getting of Wisdom, 610
Geyrhalter, Nikolaus, 539
Ghatak, Ritwik, 361–362, 476, 603
Ghobadi, Bahman, 591
Ghosh, Rituparno, 607
Ghostbusters, 654, 658
The Ghost Goes West, 248
Ghosts before Breakfast, 154–155
Ghosts of the Abyss, 707
Giant, 303
Gibson, Mel, 662
Gidal, Peter, 530–531
G.I. Joe, 649
Gilbert, Lewis, 400
Gilbert, Peter, 525
Gilpin, Charles S., 141
Gimme Shelter, 513
Ginger and Fred, 374
Gioli, Paolo, 530
The Girl, 506
Girl Basketball Player No. 5, 357
The Girl Can't Help It, 301, 308
The Girl from Leningrad, 234
Girlhood, 559, 690
The Girl of the Golden West, 64
Girls, 676
Girl Shy, 133
Girls Trip, 657
Girl Who Leaped Through Time, 625
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, 710–711
The Girl with the Hat Box, 238
Gitai, Amos, 516, 586
La Glace à trois faces ("The Three-Sided Mirror"), 75, 83
Gladiator, 646, 658, 708
A Glass of Beer, 353
Gleize, Delphine, 557, 559
Glengarry Glen Ross, 668
The Glenn Miller Story, 287
Glen or Glenda (aka *I Changed My Sex*), 297
Glens Falls Sequence, 436
Gliese, Rochus, 86, 97, 139
Gli uomini, che mascalzoni ("What Scoundrels Men Are"), 243

globalization, and films, 642, 679–696, 698, 702
global media companies, 647, 648
Globus, Yoram, 586
Glory to the Filmmaker!, 626
Glumov's Diary, 109
G-Men, 204
The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick, 561
Godard, Jean-Luc, 387, 390–392, 449, 459, 469, 485, 494, 498, 563, 710–711
  Dziga-Vertov Group and, 498–500
  jump cuts and, 387
  New Wave and, 388–392
  political modernism and, 536
The Goddess, 226
The Godfather, 458, 460, 462–464, 467–468, 604, 649
The Godfather, Part II, 464, 468
The Godfather, Part III, 465
Godmilow, Jill, 497, 519
Godzilla, 346
Goebbels, Josef, 237, 239–241
Go Fish, 670
Gogoberidze, Lana, 572
Golan, Menahem, 586
Gold Diggers of 1933, 206
Gold Diggers of 1935, 192
The Golden Coach, 333
GoldenEye 007, 717
Golden Gloves, 429
Golden Harvest, 627–628, 631, 637
Golden Mountains, 110, 178
The Golden 80s (aka *Window Shopping*), 558
Golden Swallow, 626
Goldfinger, 455
The Gold of Naples, 318
Goldovskaya, Marina, 520
The Gold Rush, 133
Goldstone, 613
Goldwyn company, 130
Goldwyn, Samuel, 65, 125, 190, 198
Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam (The Golem), 86, 88, 90, 92
Gómez, Manuel Octavio, 480
Gomorrah, 552, 565
Gondry, Michel, 538
Gone Girl, 659, 710
Gone with the Wind, 188, 192, 240, 465
Goodbye, Dragon Inn, 620
Good Bye Lenin!, 549
Goodbye Mr. Loser, 639
Goodbye Solo, 670
GoodFellas, 469, 470
Good for Nothing, 414
The Good German, 666
Good Machine company, 688
Good Men, Good Women, 619
Good Morning Babylon, 549
The Good Soldier Schweik, 165
The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, 398
The Good Woman of Szechuan, 498
Google, 654, 698, 715–716
Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne, 383
Gopalakrishnan, Adoor, 604
Gordon, Douglas, 542
Gordon, Richard, 520
Goretta, Claude, 506
Gorin, Jean-Pierre, 499, 503
Gorky, Maxim, 233
Gosford Park, 461
Goshogaoka, 542
Gosho, Heinosuke, 182, 217, 346
Goskino company, 105–106, 110, 403, 572, 574
The Gospel According to St. Matthew, 397
Gossette ("The Little Kid"), 74–75
Gosvoyenfilm company, 106
Gottheim, Larry, 528–529
Goulding, Edmund, 206
GPU, 239, 241
The Graduate, 454, 456
Graduation, 571
The Grand Budapest Hotel, 669, 705, 708
A Grand Day Out, 547
La Grande bouffe ("The Big Blowout"), 505
Grand Illusion, 130, 254, 333
The Grandmaster, 631
Les Grands manoeuvres, 331
Grand Theft Auto, 718
Gran Turino, 469
The Grapes of Wrath, 204
Grass: A Nation's Battle for Life, 161
Gravity, 600, 667, 705
Grease, 467
The Great Adventure, 421
The Great Beauty, 548
Great Britain, 145, 147
  early sound era, 181–182
  Free Cinema, 423
  Kitchen Sink cinema, 398–401
  leftist filmmaking in, 268–269
  left-wing documentaries, 268–269
  postwar years, 163–164
  sponsored documentaries and, 271–274
  studio system, 209–216
  wartime documentaries, 275–277
The Great Dictator, 196–197, 303
The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner, 525
Great Expectations (1946), 339
Great Expectations (1998), 599
The Great Gatsby, 612
The Great McGinty, 200
Great Northern company, 25, 28
The Great Piggy Bank Robbery, 292
The Great Road, 162
The Great Train Robbery (1903), 20
The Great Wall, 637, 688
Greaves, William, 513–514
Greca, Alcides, 67
Greed, 130
Greenaway, Peter, 535, 554–555
The Green Book, 692
The Green Butchers, 550
Green, Eugène, 566
Green Fields, 190
Green Room (2016), 675
The Green Room (1978), 391, 554
Greenwald, Robert, 525
Greetings, 458–459
Grémillon, Jean, 180, 253, 261–263, 334
Gremlins, 655
Gribiche, 75
Grierson, John, 121, 271–273, 421, 423, 518–519
Griffin, Annie, 557, 559
Griffith, D. W., 18, 29–30, 40–42, 48, 57, 62–63, 65, 69, 109, 115, 125–126, 129, 135–136, 138, 141, 149, 189, 197, 657
Grifi, Alberto, 449
Grindhouse, 669
Grizzly Man, 525
Grooms, Red, 446
Groulx, Gilles, 389, 429
Groundhog Day, 658
Groupe Cinq ("Group 5"), 506
Growing Up Female, 496
The Grudge (2004), 656
Grune, Karl, 97, 148
Grupo Executivo da Indústria Cinematográfica (GEICINE), 418
Guardians of the Galaxy, 651, 705
Guazzoni, Enrico, 48
Guber, Peter, 653
Guelwaar, 583
Guernica, 424
Guerra, Ciro, 598
Guerra, Ruy, 417, 478, 485, 594–595
Guevara, Alfredo, 478–479
A Guide for the Married Man, 455
The Guilt of Janet Ames, 298
Guitry, Sacha, 250
Gulf + Western industries, 454

Gulliver's Travels, 207
Gummo, 673
Gun Crazy, 300
Güney, Yilmaz, 475–476, 588
The Gunfighter, 301
Gunner Palace, 522
Guns of the Trees, 471
The Gun Woman, 135
Gutiérrez Alea, Tomás, 479–482, 601
Guy, Alice. *See* Alice Guy Blaché
A Guy Named Joe, 465
Guys and Dolls, 301
Guzmán, Patricio, 485, 520

H

Haanstra, Bert, 422
Habitual Sadness, 520
Hackney Marshes-November 4th 1977, 530
Hacksaw Ridge, 612
Haghighi, Mani, 591
Hail, Caesar!, 664
Hail Mary, 563
La Haine ("Hatred"), 690
Hallelujah!, 142, 173–174
Hallelujah the Hills, 471
Halloween, 468, 471
Hamed, Marwan, 587
Hamer, Robert, 341
Hamina, Mohamed Lakhdar, 581–582
Hamlet (1948), 339, 342
Hammer, Barbara, 537
Hammid, Alexander, 433
Hana-bi, 623
The Hand, 440
Handcuffs, 491
Hand in the Trap, 363
The Handmaiden, 633
The Hands of Orlac, 96
Hands Up!, 406
Hand Tinting, 536
Hand Written, 441
Haneke, Michael, 555–556, 566
The Hangover, 657
Hangover Square, 298
Hani, Susumu, 415, 622
Hannah and Her Sisters, 461–462, 646
Hannah Arendt, 558
Hanna, William, 292
Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th, 479
Hanoun, Marcel, 519
Hanson, John, 472
Hans Westmar, 238, 242
Happenstance, 556
Happiness (1934), 229
Happiness (1998), 672
Happy Feet, 612
Happy Mother's Day, 428
Happy New Year, 607
Happy Together, 630
Hara, Kazuo, 514, 516
Hardcore Henry, 718
A Hard Day's Night, 431, 455–456, 565
Hard to Be a God, 577
Harlan County USA, 517
Harlan, Veit, 239–241
Harman, Hugh, 143, 208
Harold and Maude, 456
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, 707
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, 600, 667
Harry Potter series, 51, 649
Hartford, David M., 67
Hartley, Hal, 670, 673
Hart, William S., 65
Harvest, 252
Harvest: 3,000 Years, 487
Harvey, 296
Hasselblad, 54
Hastings, Reed, 713–714
The Hateful Eight, 669, 705
The Haunted Hotel, 31
Das Haus zum Mond ("The House on the Moon"), 88
Havana Suite, 601
Hawks and Sparrows, 501
Hawks, Howard, 189, 195, 197–198, 201–202, 204, 206, 213, 218–219, 221–222, 225–226, 228, 230, 326, 330, 399, 456, 467, 485, 496
Haynes, Todd, 541, 670, 673
Hays Code, 188–189, 204
Hays office, 125, 456. *See also* Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA)
Hays, Will, 125
HD digital camera, 704–705
The Headless Woman, 597
Headshot, 615
Heart, Beating in the Dark, 535
Heartbreak Ridge, 469
Heart of Glass, 560–561
Heart of Spain, 269
The Heart of the World, 533–534
Hearts and Minds, 497, 522
Hearts of the World, 63
Heat, 663
Heaven and Earth Magic, 439
Heaven Knows What, 669
Heavenly Creatures, 613
The Heavenly Play, 338
Heaven's Gate, 463
Heckerling, Amy, 656, 662
He Died after the War, 500
Hein, Birgit, 531
The Heir to Genghis Khan (aka *Storm over Asia*), 110
Helge, Ladislav, 353
Hell Bent, 64
Hellboy, 667
Heller, Marielle, 662
Hellman, Monte, 459
Hell's Angels, 174
Hell's Hinges, 65
Help!, 456
Henabery, Joseph, 131
Hengdian World Studio, 640
Henry V (1945), 215, 339, 342
Hepworth, Cecil, 16, 26, 37, 163–164
Hepworth company, 26–27, 163–164
Her, 655
Her Code of Honor, 59
Hercules (1957), 48, 455
Hercules Unchained, 396
Hereafter, 469
Here Are Lions, 353
Hereditary, 676
Hermosillo, Jaime Humberto, 598–599
Her Mother's Fiancé, 34
Hero, 609, 637, 688
Hero Hiralal, 604
Heroic Purgatory, 414
A Hero Never Dies, 631
Hervil, René, 52
Herzog, Werner, 525–526, 560–562, 573
He's a Woman, She's a Man, 630
Hester Street, 472
He Who Gets Slapped, 138
Hidden Figures, 652
Hidden Fortress, 372
The Hidden Fortress, 371
Hidden Truth 2, 585
Hide and Seek, 586
Hideko the Bus Conductor, 222
High and Low, 372
High Anxiety, 469
High Heels, 553
High School, 514
High Sierra, 198, 200
The Highway (aka *The Big Road*), 226
Hillcoat, John, 612
Hill, George Roy, 459
Hill, Jerome, 531
Hi, Mom!, 459
Hinton, Carma, 520
Hippler, Fritz, 239
Hiroshima mon amour, 387, 394–395, 407, 412, 424, 459, 505, 554, 558
His Girl Friday, 189, 198

His Majesty, the American, 131
Histoire de detective ("Detective Story"), 160, 438
Histoire d'un soldat inconnu ("History of an Unknown Soldier"), 268
Histoire(s) du cinéma, 711
historical epics, 48, 64, 86–87, 120, 301–302, 454, 457, 485
History Lessons, 509
History of the World, Part I, 469
Hitchcock, Alfred, 84, 146, 148–149, 164, 169, 181–182, 190, 200, 212–213, 296, 303–304, 306, 366, 390–391, 456, 465, 467, 469, 498, 542, 555
Hitler: A Film from Germany, 508, 562
Hitlerjunge Quex, 238, 244
Hittman, Eliza, 669
H_2O, 157–158, 266
The Hobbit, 614, 667, 702
Hobson's Choice, 340
Hochbaum, Werner, 240
Hodkinson, W. W., 57
Hogg, Joanna, 559
Hold Me while I'm Naked, 445
The Hole, 620
A Hole in My Heart, 566
Holger-Madsen, Forest, 52
Holiday, 189, 201–202
Holiday for Henrietta, 331
Hollywood, 26, 30–31
  1910s, 45, 56–66
  1920s comedy in, 132–134
  1930-1945, 185–208
  1946-1948, 286–287
  1960-1980, 452–473
  advances in filmmaking, 191–196
  blockbusters, 649, 652
  cable television/home video and, 644–645
  China's investment in, 685
  coronavirus outbreak, impact of, 676–677
  female directors, 662
  franchise fever, 649–650
  global cinema by, 680–684
  late silent era, 122–144
  postwar filmmaking, 298–303
  self-censorship in, 188–189
  sound recording in, 191–192
  special effects in 1930s, 193–195
  Technicolor use, 192–193
  and television, 292–293
Hollywood Pictures, 646
Hollywood studios, 57–58
  1930-1945, 185–208
  decline of, 287–294
  independent production, 190
  Majors, 186–187
  Minors, 188–190
The Holy Girl, 597
The Holy Mountain, 501
The Home and the World, 383
Home Box Office (HBO), 522
home theaters, 645
home video, 451, 540, 545, 567, 585, 624, 642, 644–645, 647, 652, 673–674, 682, 691, 693, 695, 712, 715, 720. *See also* DVD (Digital Video Disc); streaming
  Blu-ray, 525, 693, 712–713, 720
  cable and satellite television, 540, 587, 604–605, 644–645, 648, 683
  Nigeria and, 585
  streaming, 641, 715
  videocassettes, 605, 644
  video CD (VCD), 585
  video on demand, 585, 720
Homicide: Life on the Streets, 565, 686
L'Homme atlantique ("The Atlantic Man"), 559
L'homme aux gants blancs ("The Man with White Gloves"), 42
L'Homme du large ("The Man of the Open Sea"), 75–76
Homunculus, 50
Hondo, Med, 486, 488, 583
Honeydripper, 672
Honey for Oshun, 601
Honey I Shrunk the Kids, 650
Hong Kong, 626–631, 685
Hong Kong Film Festival, 629
Hong Sangsoo, 632–633
Honky Tonk Freeway, 659
Hook, 465
Hoop Dreams, 525
Hooper, Tobe, 471
Hopper, Dennis, 459
Hopscotch, 594
horizontal integration, 23
L'Horloge ("The Clock"), 77
horror films, 656, 676
The Horse Thief, 635
The Horse Whisperer, 708
Hosoda, Mamoru, 625
Hospital, 514
The Host, 615, 633, 688
Hôtel des invalides, 424
Hotel Imperial, 97, 137
Hotel Rwanda, 584
Hotel Transylvania, 658
Hot Fuzz, 548
Hot Rod Girl, 297
Hou Hsiao-hsien, 618–620, 626, 638, 673, 685, 691
The Hour of the Furnaces (La Hora de los hornos), 478, 483–484, 596
Hour of the Wolf, 369
House at the Terminus, 353
The House I Live In, 350
House of Cards, 710
House of Flying Daggers, 637, 688
House of Rothschild, 239
House of the Angel, 363
House of Usher, 297
House of Wax, 292
The House on Haunted Hill, 297
The House on Trubnaya, 109–110, 114
House Party, 670
House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), 286
Housing Problems, 273
Howard, Ron, 662
Howards End, 668
Howard, William K., 200
How Green Was My Valley, 197, 303
How I Won the War, 498
How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman, 418
How the West Was Won, 289, 453
How to Marry a Millionaire, 290
Hristov, Hristo, 492
Huang Jianxin, 635
Huayi company, 639
Hubley, Faith, 538
Hubley, John, 292, 538
The Hudsucker Proxy, 663–664
Hughes, Howard, 174–175, 662
Hughes, John, 656, 662
Hugo, 707
Hugo, Ian, 438, 444
Hui, Ann, 629
Huillet, Danièle, 401–402, 507–509, 518, 536, 553, 562, 564
Hui, Michael, 628
Hu, King, 626–627
Hulk, 620
Hulu, 714
Hum Aapke Hain Koun. . .!, 605
L'Humanité, 551
Humanity and Paper Balloons, 216–217
Humoresque, 135
Humorous Phases of Funny Faces, 31
The Hunchback of Notre Dame, 135, 139
The 100-to-One Shot, 36
Hungary, 353, 409, 412, 492, 567, 569–570
Hunger Games franchise, 646
Hunger Games series, 649
The Hunt (1959), 388
The Hunt (1965), 505

The Hunt (2020), 676
Hunter, Ross, 301
The Hunters, 422
Hurd, Earl, 66
Las Hurdes, 279, 367, 424
Hurlements en faveur de Sade ("Howls for de Sade"), 435
The Hurt Locker, 662
Hurwitz, Leo, 266, 269, 270
Husbands, 472
The Hustler, 307
Huston, John, 200, 205, 275
Hutton, Peter, 532
Hypothèse du tableau volé ("Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting"), 562

I
I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang, 191, 203
I, a Man, 447
I Am Curious (Blue), 501
I am Curious (Yellow), 501
I Am Not Madame Bovary, 640, 708
Ibermedia, 593, 602
Ibsen, Henrik, 337–338
ICAIC. *See* Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos
Ice, 497
Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs, 704
Ice Age series, 658
Ice Cube, 662
Ichikawa, Kon, 348, 422, 622, 624
Ichi the Killer, 624
Ici et ailleurs ("Here and Elsewhere"), 500
Iconostasis, 492
I, Daniel Blake, 551
The Idea, 280
Ideal company, 163
Identification Marks: None, 405
Identification of a Woman, 376
Identity, 659
IDHEC. *See* Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques
The Idiots, 687
I Don't Want to Talk about It, 596
I Even Met Happy Gypsies, 408, 491
If . . ., 505
Iger, Bob, 651
Iimura, Takahiko, 449
Ikiru, 371–373
I Know What You Did Last Summer, 668
I Know Where I'm Going!, 340, 342
Il Grido, 314, 375, 376
Ilienko, Yuri, 492
I Like It Like That, 662
Illumination, 492
Il Mulino del Po, 318
Ilo Ilo, 614
I Love Lucy, 293
Il perfido canto, 152
Il Posto ("The Job," aka *The Sound of Trumpets*), 396
Il Signor Max ("Mr. Max"), 243
Images, 459
Images Disturbed by a Puissant Parasite, 530
Images d'Ostende, 159, 268
Imaginary Landscape no. 4 (John Cage), 421
Imamura, Shohei, 414–415, 622, 624
IMAX, 522, 639, 655, 664, 683, 705, 707
Imcine, 599
The Imitation Game, 546
Imitation of Life, 301
Im Kwon-taek, 631–632
The Immigrant, 65
L'Immortelle, 395
I'm Not There, 673
Impatience, 160, 437
The Impossible, 533
In a Lonely Place, 307
In Another Country, 633
Iñárritu, Alejandro González, 599–600, 661, 664, 667, 719
In a Year of 13 Moons, 552
Inception, 665–667, 705
Ince, Thomas H., 28, 62
Les Inconnus de la terre ("The Unknown Ones of the Land"), 430
An Inconvenient Truth, 522, 675
The Incredibles 2, 662
The Incredible Shrinking Man, 302
Independence Day, 658, 681
Independent Feature Project (IFP), 472, 674
Independent Film Channel (IFC), 675
Independent Film Foundation, 434
independent films, in US, 295–298, 470–473, 667–677
  as art films, 672–673
  auteurism in, 669
  genre revisions, 669–671
  and industry, 673–677
  Majors and, 674–675
  mini-major studio support of, 646
  new age of, 667–677
  off-Hollywood, 471–472, 668, 712
  retro-Hollywood, 668–669
  spirit of 1970s, 672
  television and, 675–676
Independent Motion Picture (IMP) company, 28, 56
independent production, 186, 190, 295–298, 470–473
India
  blockbusters, 606
  coproductions and satellite TV, 604–605
  DVD technology and, 607
  film music, 360
  on global stage, 607–608
  mass output and art cinema, 602–608
  "middle cinema," 607
  New Indian Cinema, 476
  Parallel Cinema, 603
  postwar era, 358–362
  prewar era, 42–43
  from 1970s, 602–608
  studio system, 224–225
Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, 654
Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, 655
Indiana Jones series, 649
India Song, 558–559
Industrial Britain, 272
Infernal Affairs, 631
The Informer, 139
Ingeborg Holm, 44, 55–56
Inglourious Basterds, 669
Ingram, Rex, 128
Ingster, Boris, 205
Inherent Vice, 672
The Inherited Taint, 34–35
L'Inhumaine ("The Inhuman One"), 75, 82
Initial D, 631
Inland Empire, 669, 701
In Memoriam, 718
Inn in Tokyo, 219
Innocence Unprotected, 409
Innocent Sorcerers, 405
L'Inondation ("The Flood"), 75–76, 82
I Not Stupid, 614
In Our Times, 618, 619
In Praise of Love, 563, 711
The Inquisition, 598
The Insect Woman, 415
Inside Llewyn Davis, 663
Inside Man, 659
The Insider, 663
Insidious, 674, 676
Insomnia, 665
Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques (IDHEC), 329
Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC), 478–479, 482, 488, 601

Instructions Not Included, 689
Interiors, 459, 462
InterMission, 556
International Creative Management agency, 463
International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), 312
Internet, 451, 522, 526, 531, 540–541, 578, 585, 606, 639–640, 647, 652, 674–675, 680, 688, 693, 695, 698, 702, 712–714, 716
Interstellar, 653, 659, 665, 705
The Interview, 603
In the City, 556
In the Country, 497
In the Course of Time (aka *Kings of the Road*), 561
In the Fog, 577
In the Mood for Love, 630
In the Name of Life, 349
In the Realm of the Senses, 503, 622
In the Shadows, 555
In the Street, 421
In the Year of the Pig, 497, 517
Intimacy, 566
Intimate Lighting, 406
Intolerance, 63, 87, 109, 129, 149, 441
The Intouchables, 548
An Introduction to Marriage, 219
The Inugami Family, 622
The Inugamis, 624
Invasion!, 719
Invasion of the Body Snatchers, 302, 308
The Invention of Destruction (aka *The Fabulous World of Jules Verne*), 440
The Invisible Man (1933), 188, 203, 556
The Invisible Man (2020), 676
In Which We Serve, 214–215, 339
Iosseliani, Otar, 492, 556
IP5, 561
iPhones, 707
Iran, 589–592
Iraq, 591
Ireland, Frederick J., 59
The Irishman, 708, 714
Irma La Douce, 304
The Iron Crown, 244
The Iron Curtain, 286
The Iron Horse, 135
L'Ironie du destin ("The Irony of Destiny"), 75–76
Iron Ladies of Liberia, 521
Iron Man, 681
Iron Man 3, 639
Irony of Fate; or, Enjoy Your Bath!, 572
Irony of Fate: The Continuation, 576
Irreversible, 566
Ishii, Sogo, 622
I Shot Jesse James, 307
Ising, Rudolf, 143, 208
Is It Easy to Be Young?, 520
The Island, 415
The Isle, 633
Isle of Dogs, 669
Isn't Life Wonderful, 129
Isong, Emem, 585
Isou, Isidore, 441
Israel, 586–587
Istanbul Tales, 589
Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy?, 538
It, 131
Itala company, 24–25, 30
Italian for Beginners, 550, 687
Italian Neorealism, 315–322
Italian Spring, 315–317
The Italian Straw Hat, 74
Italy, 145, 152
  beyond Neorealism, 322–325
  early film production and exhibition, 24–25, 48, 164
  Fascist era, 241–246
  Neorealism and, 315–322
  postwar years, 164–166
  spaghetti Westerns, 398
  Young Cinema, 396–398
Itami, Juzo, 622
It Conquered the World, 297
It Happened One Night, 189, 201–202
It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives, 537
It Must Be Heaven, 587
Ito, Daisuke, 216
It's Always Fair Weather, 301
It's a Wonderful Life, 303
It's No Longer Enough to Pray, 485
Itto, 252
iTunes, 715
Ivanhoe, 302
Ivanovsky, Alexander, 106, 120
Ivan's Childhood, 402–403
Ivan the Terrible, 236, 349, 351, 398
Ivens, Joris, 121, 158, 268–269, 421, 436
I Vinti (The Vanquished), 316
I Vitelloni ("The Young Calves"), 316, 325, 374–375, 465
Ivory, James, 668
Iwai, Shunji, 622
I Walked with a Zombie, 203
I Was a Male War Bride, 202
I Was a Teenage Frankenstein, 297
I Was Born, But ..., 219–220
Iwerks, Ub, 143

J

J'Accuse ("I Accuse"), 75
Jackie, 598, 705
Jackie Brown, 669
Jack's Dream, 280
Jackson, Pat, 276
Jackson, Peter, 613–614, 665, 694, 698, 702, 707, 717
Jackson, Watt, 276
Jacobs, Ken, 439, 443, 446, 449, 528, 533
Jacob's Ladder, 658
Jacquemin, André, 165
James, Steve, 525
Jancsó, Miklós, 387, 409–411, 419, 492–493, 501–502, 554, 569–570
Jane, 427, 428
Janie's Janie, 496
Japan, 94, 148, 162, 206, 344, 449, 504, 601, 614–615, 634, 640, 644, 663, 681, 683
  acquisition of Hollywood studios and, 646–647, 680
  anime, 624–626
  early film production in, 26
  early sound era, 182–183
  international style and, 148
  New Wave, 412–415
  post 1970s, 621–626
  postwar era, 345–348
  1920s, 162–163
  Sony company, 621
  studio system, 216–224
  underground movement, 449
  World War II and, 221–224
  yakuza films, 621
Japón, 599
Jarman, Derek, 537, 541, 562
Jarmusch, Jim, 667–668, 673
Jasný, Vojtech, 353, 407
Jaws, 453, 462–463, 465, 467, 649, 652, 658
Jayamanne, Laleen, 519
The Jazz Singer, 169–170, 179, 181
Jealous Lovers, 585
Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du commerce, 1080 Bruxelles, 503–505, 555, 557, 564
J. Edgar, 469
Jenkins, Barrie, 673
Jenkins, C. Francis, 10
Jenkins-Ozawa (JO), 182
Jenkins, Patty, 662
Jennings, Humphrey, 276–277, 420, 538
Jensen, Anders Thomas, 550
Jepthah's Daughter, 35
Jerry Maguire, 656, 660

Jersey Boys, 469
Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company, 57
Jessner, Leopold, 88, 92
Jesus VR, 719
Je tu il elle ("I You He She"), 503, 534
Jeunet, Jean-Pierre, 563
Les Jeux des anges ("Games of Angels"), 436
Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse ("The Play of Reflections and Speed"), 156
Jeux interdits (Forbidden Games), 330
Jezebel, 198, 200
JFK, 663
Jiang Wen, 636
Jia Zhangke, 638
jidai-geki films, 163, 216
Jimeno, Eduardo, 21
Jireš, Jaromil, 388, 406
Jodorowsky, Alejandro, 501
Joe, 456
Johanna, 570
John Carter, 654
Johnny English, 548
Johnny Guitar, 307
Johnny Mnemonic, 719
Johnny O'Clock, 307
Johnson, Kirsten, 525
Joker, 470, 692
Le Joli mai ("The Pretty May"), 425, 430–431, 519
Jolly Fellows (aka *Jazz Comedy*), 233–234
Jom ("Dignity"), 582–583
Jonah, Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000, 506
Jonas Brothers, 704
Jones, Chuck, 208, 292
Jordan, Larry, 526
Jour de fête ("Holiday"), 379–380
Journeys from Berlin/1971, 534–535
Journey to the West, 620, 639
Le Jour se lève (Daybreak), 253–255, 315
The Joyless Street, 97–98
JSA, 633
Judex (1916), 50
Judex (1963), 395
Judge Priest, 197
Judith of Bethulia, 62
Jud Süss, 237, 239, 241, 261
Jugend ("Youth"), 240
Jules and Jim, 391, 558
Julian, Rupert, 135
julien donkey-boy, 700
Julien, Isaac, 537
Juliet of the Spirits, 374
Julietta, 553
Juliette ou la clef des songes ("Juliette, or the Key of Dreams"), 329
July, Miranda, 672
The Jungle Book, 453–454
Jungle Fever, 663
Juno, 675
Ju-on (The Grudge), 624
Jupiter Ascending, 654
Jurassic Park, 465, 605, 658, 662, 681–682, 688, 700
Justice est faite ("Justice Is Done"), 315, 330
Justice League films, 650
Just Pals, 126–127, 135
Jutra, Claude, 429
Jutzi, Piel, 97, 148, 267
Juvenile Court, 514

K

Kaante ("Thorns"), 607
Kaboré, Gaston, 583
Kadár, Ján, 353, 491
Kadosh, 586
Kagemusha, 372–373, 622
Der Kaiser von Kalifornien ("The Emperor of California"), 240
Kalatozov, Mikhail, 162, 350
Kalem company, 28, 30
Kal Ho Nah Ho ("Tomorrow Will Not Be"), 607
Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love, 604
Kamba, Sebastien, 487
Kameradschaft ("Comradeship"), 176
Kammerspiel, 92–94, 338
Kamwa, Daniel, 582
Kanal ("Sewers"), 354
Kandahar, 591
Kane, 305
Kanevsky, Vitaly, 575
Kaos, 549
Kaplan, Nelly, 507
Kapoor, Raj, 359–360
Kapur, Shekhar, 604
Karabasz, Kazimierz, 431
Karina, Anna, 507
Kar-leung, Lau, 628
Karl May, 508
Karya, Teguh, 614
Kasba, 604
Kasdan, Lawrence, 662
Kashyap, Anurag, 606
Kassovitz, Mathieu, 690
Katzelmacher, 510
Katzenberg, Jeffrey, 466, 646, 650, 658, 715
Kaul, Mani, 603
Kaurismäki, Aki, 513, 552
Käutner, Helmut, 241
Kawalerowicz, Jerzy, 353, 405
Kawase, Naomi, 623
Kaye, Stanton, 448
Kazan, Elia, 204, 305, 307
Kean, 75–76, 82
Keaton, Buster, 65, 133–134, 657
Kechiche, Abdellatif, 552, 581
Keep on Rockin', 428
Keighley, William, 204
Kei, Shu, 629
Kelani, Tunde, 585
Keller, Marjorie, 536
Kelly, Gene, 301
Kennedy-Miller firm, 610
Kenny, 612
Kent, Jennifer, 612
Kent, Sidney, 187
Kerkorian, Kirk, 454, 645
Kermadec, Liliane de, 507
Kertész, Mihály. *See* Curtiz, Michael
Kes, 551
Key of Life, 626
Keystone company, 65, 134
Khan, Farah, 606–607
Khan, Mehboob, 359
Khanzhonkov, Alexander, 102
Khanzhonkov company, 49, 102–103
Kheifits, Iosif, 349
Khrustalyov, My Car!, 574, 577
Khrzhanovsky, Ilya, 577
Kiarostami, Abbas, 590–591, 701
The Kid, 46, 132
The Kid Brother, 133
Kiecœlowski, Krzysztof, 569
Kill Bill, 669
Killed the Family and Went to the Movies, 419
The Killer, 630
Killer of Sheep, 670
The Killers, 205
The Killing, 299
The Killing of a Sacred Deer, 555
Kim Ki-duk, 633
Kinatay, 617
Kind Hearts and Coronets, 341
Kinepolis company, 683
Kinetograph camera, 7
Kinetoscope, 7–8
Kinetta, 555
King, Allan, 513
The King and I, 301
King, Henry, 187
A King in New York, 303
The King Is Alive, 687
King Kong (1933), 161, 187, 192–193, 195
King Kong (2005), 614, 665, 698, 702, 705, 717
King Lear (1987), 563

King of Comedy, 469–470
King of Crime, 574
King of Jazz, 183
King of Kings (1961), 307
The King of Kings (1927), 128
King of Kong, 525
The King of Marvin Gardens, 458
King of Masks, 636
King of the Children, 635
Kings and Queen, 550
King-Size Canary, 292
Kinney National Company, 645
Kinney National Services, 454
Kino-Eye, 112
Kino-Pravda, 161–162, 430
Kinoshita, Keisuke, 347–348
Kinugasa, Teinosuke, 148, 163, 216, 346
Kippur, 586
Kirsanoff, Dimitri, 75–77, 83
Kiss, 446–447
Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, 659
Kiss Me Deadly, 300, 302, 308
Kiss Me Kate, 292, 301
Kiss of the Dragon, 686
Kiss of the Spider Woman, 594
Kitano, Takeshi, 623, 626, 669
Kitchen, 447
Kitchen Sink cinema, 398–401
Kitty Foyle, 298
Klahr, Lewis, 534
Klangfilm company, 175
Klein, Bonnie Sherr, 518
Klein, Charles, 159
Klein, Chuck, 496
The Kleptomaniac, 20
Klimov, Elem, 573, 574
Kluge, Alexander, 386, 401, 412, 419, 507–510, 553
Knife in the Water, 405–406
Knights of the Round Table, 302
Knocked Up, 657
Kobe, Hans, 88
Kodak camera, 5
Koenig, Wolf, 423, 428
Kokoschka, Oskar, 89
Kolberg, 240
Kolirin, Eran, 587
Kolowrat-Krakowsky, Alexander Joseph, 165–166
Komatsu Riyuzo, 164
Konchalovsky, Andrei, 403, 492, 572
Kon, Satoshi, 625
Kontroll, 570
Kopalin, Ilya, 277
Kopple, Barbara, 517, 526
Korda, Alexander, 190, 210–213, 252, 339
Korean Film Council (KOFIC), 632
Kore-eda, Hirokozu, 623, 626
Korine, Harmony, 700
Kosma, Joseph, 262
Kozintsev, Grigori, 106, 109–110, 112, 119–120, 148, 178–179, 231, 349
Kragh-Jacobsen, Søren, 687
Kramer, Robert, 497
Kramo-Lancine, Fadiko, 582
Kren, Kurt, 437–438, 441, 449, 528
Kriemhilds Rache ("Kriemhild's Revenge"), 88, 91–92
Kristina Talking Pictures, 534
Kroitor, Roman, 428
Kubelka, Peter, 436–437, 441, 528
Kubo and the Two Strings, 706
Kubrick, Stanley, 294, 299, 459, 468
Kuchar, George, 445, 540
Kuchar, Mike, 445
Kuhle Wampe, 237, 257, 267, 498, 501, 526
Ku Klux Klan-The Invisible Empire, 428
Kuleshov effect, 104, 106
Kuleshov, Lev, 102–104, 109–111, 119–121, 229, 349
Kulidzhanov, Lev, 350
Kultkino company, 106
Kung Fu Panda, 658, 680
Kurosawa, Akira, 223, 346, 348, 364, 366, 371–373, 398, 412, 622
Kurosawa, Kiyoshi, 623, 626
Kurys, Diane, 505, 507, 557
Kusturica, Emir, 567
Kutuzov, 236
Kwan, Stanley, 630

L

L.627, 548
Lac aux dames ("Women's Lake"), 250–251, 259
LaCava, Gregory, 202
Lace, 110
Lacombe Lucien, 505
L.A. Confidential, 657
Lacôte, Philippe, 584
The Ladies' Man, 454
The Lady and the Duke, 393
The Lady Eve, 202
The Lady from Shanghai, 305, 307
Lady Helen's Escapade, 30
The Lady in the Lake, 298
The Ladykillers, 342
The Lady Vanishes, 212
Lady Windermere's Fan, 137, 138
Laemmle, Carl, 27–28, 56–57, 124
Lagaan ("Land Tax"), 607
Laika company, 706
Lake of Women, 414
La La Land, 646, 671, 676, 705, 708
Lamaè, Karel, 165
Lamb of God, 593
Lam, Dante, 639
Lampson, Mary, 497
Lancelot du Lac, 377
The Land (1942), 272
The Land (1969), 475
Land and Freedom, 551
Land of Hope, 626
Land of Promise, 492
Land of Silence and Darkness, 560
Land of the Pharaohs, 302
Landow, George, 528
Landreth, Chris, 538
Landscape after Battle, 492
Landscape in the Mist, 554
Die Landstrasse ("The Country Road"), 44, 47
The Land without Women, 175, 183
Langdon, Harry, 134
Lang, Fritz, 88, 90–92, 94, 96–97, 109, 153, 175–176, 178, 194, 200, 203, 205, 237, 251, 304–305, 311, 363, 386, 392–393, 395, 401, 689
Lanthimos, Yorgos, 555–556
Lantz, Walter, 207
Lanzmann, Claude, 516
LaPore, Mark, 541
Larks on a String, 490–491, 568
Larraín, Pablo, 598
Lasseter, John, 706
Last Days of Gomorrah, 509
The Last Days of Pompeii, 24
The Last Emperor, 548
The Last Laugh, 92–96, 139, 146, 148, 203
The Last Lear, 607
Last Life in the Universe, 615
The Last Metro, 391, 554
The Last Moment, 138
The Last Movie, 459
The Last of the Mohicans (1920), 64, 87
The Last of the Mohicans (1992), 663
The Last Picture Show, 456, 458
The Last Supper, 601
Last Tango in Paris, 545
The Last Temptation of Christ, 469
The Last Trick, 526
Last Year at Marienbad, 394–395, 407
Latcho Drom, 689
Late Spring, 347
Latham loop, 10, 27–28, 56
Latin America, 362–364, 580, 594
  revolutionary cinema, 476–486
Lattuada, Alberto, 316

Lau, Andrew, 631, 639
Laughlin, Tom, 471
Lau Kar-leung, 628
Laura, 205
The Lavender Hill Mob, 341–342
Lawale, 536
Law and Order, 514
Lawder, Standish, 446
The Lawnmower Man, 719
Lawrence of Arabia, 340, 453, 457
Lazybones, 135
Leacock, Richard, 426–428, 430, 496, 514, 517
The Lead Shoes, 438
A League of Their Own, 662
Lean, David, 214–215, 339–340
Leaves from Satan's Book, 149
Leaving Las Vegas, 674
Lebanon, 587
Le Bargy, Charles, 24
Le Chanois, Jean-Paul, 257
Leduc, Paul, 598–599
Lee, Ang, 620–621, 627, 688
Lee, Bruce, 627–628
Lee Chang-dong, 633
Lee Kang-sheng, 620
Lee Kwang-kuk, 633
Leenhardt, Roger, 334
Lee, Spike, 663, 670, 676
Le Film Cinématographique Belge, 165
Le Forestier, François, 165
Left Bank groups, 393–396
The Left-Handed Gun, 301, 308
Legendary Entertainment, 685, 688
The Legend of Suram Fortress, 574
Léger, Fernand, 153, 156–157, 436, 512
Legg, Stuart, 273
The Lego Movie, 649
Legoshin, Vladimir, 233
Lego Star Wars, 651
Le Grice, Malcolm, 530
Legros, Paul, 423
Leigh, Mike, 551–552
Lelouch, Claude, 396
Lemaître, Maurice, 441
Lemonade, 541
Lenica, Jan, 440
Leningrad Cowboys Go America, 552
Leningrad studio of Sovkino, 106
Leni, Paul, 88, 96, 139, 203
Lennon, John, 528
Lenny Lenny Without Tears, 517
Der Leone Have Sept Cabeças (The Lion Has Seven Heads), 485
Leone, Sergio, 223, 398, 469, 504, 610, 669
Léon the Professional, 549
The Leopard, 322, 397
Le Prince, Louis, 6
LeRoy, Mervyn, 187, 191, 203–204, 206
A Lesson in Love, 368
Lessons of Darkness, 525
Lester, Richard, 455–456, 458
Lethal Weapon franchise, 653, 657
Leth, Jørgen, 539, 688
Let It Be, 513
Let Me In, 656
Let's Get Lost, 517
Letter from My Village, 581
Letters from Iwo Jima, 469
Letter to Jane, 499
A Letter to Three Wives, 298
Let the Bullets Fly, 636
Let There Be Light, 275
Let the Right One In, 656
Lettre de Sibérie (Letter from Siberia), 425, 501, 519
Leviathan, 540, 542, 577, 707
Levine, Joseph E., 428
Levinson, Barry, 662
Levitt, Helen, 421
Levring, Kristian, 687
Lewis, Herschell Gordon, 471
Lewis, Jerry, 454
Lewton, Val, 187, 203
Leyda, Jay, 269, 278
L'Herbier, Marcel, 72, 75–76, 78–79, 82–84, 96, 148, 151, 262, 331
Lichtspiel Opus 1, 152, 436
Lichtspiel Opus 2, 152–153
Lichtspiel, schwarz-weiss-grau ("Play of Light, Black-White-Gray"), 157–158
Liebelei, 177, 243, 251
Life, 426
The Life and Death of 9413-a Hollywood Extra, 159
The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp, 215
The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter, 518
Life, Animated, 538
Life in Denmark, 539
Life Is Beautiful, 548
Life Is Sweet, 551
Life of an American Fireman, 19–20
Life of an Evangelist, 52
The Life of Juanita Castro, 447
The Life of Moses, 29
The Life of Oharu, 347
Life of Pi, 620, 707
lighting, 36, 58, 72, 118, 126
Lightning, 346
Lights in the Dusk, 552
The Lights of New York, 170, 173
Lights Out (2013), 713
Lights Out (2016), 713
Light-Space Modulator (Moholy-Nagy), 158
Li Jun, 357
Like Someone in Love, 591
Like Water for Chocolate, 599
Lili Marlene, 552
Liliom, 251
Liliomfi, 353
Limelight, 303
The Limey, 673
Lind, Alfred, 25
Lindau, Paul, 47
Linder, Max, 23, 73–74
Line Describing a Cone, 532–533, 542
The Lin Family Shop, 357
Ling Zifeng, 634
Linklater, Richard, 673, 700
Lin Nong, 357
Lion Hunt, 25
The Lion King (1994), 470, 578, 650, 654, 658, 681, 706, 719
The Lion King (2019), 719–720
Lionsgate, 646, 662, 676
Lions Love, 507
Listen to Britain, 276
Littín, Miguel, 484–485, 597
Little Caesar, 188, 204
The Little Chaos, 509
Little Dieter Needs to Fly, 525
Little Dog for Roger, 530
Little Fish, 612
The Little Flowers of Saint Francis, 323, 365
The Little Foxes, 198, 328
The Little Fugitive, 298
The Little Mermaid, 454, 650, 658
Little Miss Sunshine, 675
Little Nemo, 31, 32
The Little Princess, 599
Little Shop of Horrors, 297
Little Stabs at Happiness, 439–440
The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir, 334
Little Three, 186, 188–190, 287. *See also* Columbia; Minors; United Artists (UA); Universal
Little Vera, 574
Little Women, 668
The Little World of Don Camillo, 331
Litvak, Anatole, 251
Liu Jiayin, 539
Liu Qiong, 357
The Lives of Others, 547
Lives of Performers, 534
Living in Bondage, 585
Li Yang, 638
Llosa, Claudia, 598

Llosa, Mario Vargas, 594
Lloyd, Harold, 133, 657
Loach, Ken, 546, 550–552
Loader, Jayne, 518
The Loafer, 39
The Lobster, 555
The Locket, 298
Lockhart, Sharon, 542
Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels, 549
The Lodger, 148
Loeb, Janice, 421
Loew, Marcus, 27, 123
Loew's, Inc., 123
Løken, Erik, 388
Lola, 393, 552
Lola and Billy the Kid, 689
Lola Montès, 331, 332
Lolita, 294
London Can Take It!, 276
London Film Festival, 687
London Film Productions, 210
The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, 399
Lonely Boy, 428
The Lonely Villa, 36, 40, 657
Lonergan, Kenneth, 670
Lonesome, 138–139
Lonesome Cowboys, 447
Lone Star, 672
Lone White Sail, 233
The Long Bodies, 436
The Long Day Closes, 555
Long Day's Journey into Night, 640
The Longest Nite, 631
Long Film for Ambient Light, 532
Longford, Raymond, 67
The Long Goodbye, 461, 672
Long Pants, 134
Longtime Companion, 670
The Long Voyage Home, 296
Look Back in Anger, 399
Looking for Langston, 537
The Lord of the Rings, 51, 613–614, 640, 649, 653, 658, 665, 681, 688, 694, 698–699, 705, 712
Lord of the Rings games: *The Two Towers,* 700, 717
Lord, Peter, 547
Lorentz, Pare, 270, 420
L'Oro di Napoli (The Gold of Naples), 317
Lorre, Peter, 310–311
Losey, Joseph, 286, 305
Los Golfos ("The Drifters"), 387
Los Olvidados ("The Young and the Lost"), 364, 367–368, 397
Lo squadrone bianco ("The White Squadron"), 242–243
Lost Highway, 669, 673
The Lost Honor of Katherina Blum, 509, 558
Lost in Russia, 717
Lost in Thailand, 639
The Lost Weekend, 200, 205
Lot in Sodom, 159
Louisiana Story, 272, 421, 426
Loulou, 551
Love, 449, 505
Love Actually, 546
Love Affair, or the Tragedy of a Switchboard Operator, 408–409
Love and Anarchy, 505
The Love Bug, 454
Love Exposure, 626
Love in the Afternoon, 393
Love Letter, 622
Love Me Tender, 301
Love Me Tonight, 200–201
The Love of Jeanne Ney, 98–99
The Love of Zero, 159
The Love Parade, 171, 197, 200
Lover Come Back, 455
Lovers and Lollipops, 298
Loves of a Blonde, 406
The Loves of Pharaoh, 94–95
Love Story, 458, 460
Love Streams, 472
Loving, 442
Low, Colin, 423
Loznitsa, Sergei, 577
Lt. Robin Crusoe, U.S.N., 454
Lubin company, 28, 30, 34, 39
Lubitsch, Ernst, 55, 87, 93–94, 124, 129, 137, 139, 146, 163, 171, 186, 191, 197, 213, 219, 303, 391
LucasArts, 466
Lucasfilm, 466, 651, 681
Lucas, George, 372–373, 458, 462–468, 473, 629, 649, 664, 681, 694–695, 697– 698, 703–704, 706, 709, 710
Lucía, 479, 481–482, 601
Luci del varietà (Variety Lights), 316
The Luck o' the Foolish, 134
Lucky Luciano, 504
Lucky Star, 140
Lucy, 686
Ludwig, 322
Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King, 508
Luhrmann, Baz, 611–612
Lumet, Sidney, 308
Lumière agency, 548
Lumière brothers, Louis and Auguste, 8–9, 11–14, 448
Lumière d'été ("Summer Light"), 261–263
Lumière Frères company, 8, 12–13, 16, 21, 33
Lunacharsky, Anatoli, 102, 105, 107, 120–121
The Lunchbox, 607
Lungin, Pavel, 575
Lust, Caution, 620–621
Lust for Ecstasy, 445
La Lutte ("The Match"), 429
Luttes en Italie ("Struggles in Italy"), 499
Lux company, 241
Lydia, 298
Lye, Len, 153, 281, 436, 444
Ly, Ladj, 689
Lynch, David, 97, 458, 669, 701, 713
lyrical film, 440–441
Lysis, 439

M

M, 175–176, 205
Maas, Willard, 278, 432, 442
Mabel's Awful Mistake, 65
Maborosi, 623, 626
Macartney-Filgate, Terence, 426, 428
Macbeth (1948), 305
MacDonagh, John, 67
Macheret, Alexander, 229
Machin, Alfred, 34
The Machine to Kill Bad People, 316–317, 323
Machorka-Muff, 401
Maciste all'inferno ("Maciste in Hell"), 164
Mackendrick, Alexander, 341–342
Mack, Max, 47
Maclaine, Christopher, 439
Macon County Line, 471
Macpherson, Kenneth, 160
Macunaíma, 418
Madadayo, 372
Madagascar (1995), 601
Madagascar (2005), 658
Madam and Wife, 182, 217
Madame de . . . (*The Earrings of Madame de . . .*), 331
Madame DuBarry, 87, 93, 137, 146
Mädchen in Uniform ("Girls in Uniform"), 177
Maddin, Guy, 97, 533
Mad Max, 610
Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, 611
Mad Max: Fury Road, 612, 657
Mad Max II (aka *The Road Warrior*), 610
Madmoni, Yossi, 587
Madrigal, 601–602
Magellan, 531

The Magical Maestro, 292
Magical Realism, 594, 600
The Magic Flute, 369
The Magician, 369, 370
The Magic Mountain, 215
The Magnanimous Cuckold, 108
The Magnificent Ambersons, 195–196, 199–200, 305
Magnificent Obsession, 301
Magnolia, 659, 672, 712
Magnusson, Charles, 53–54
Mahabharata, 224
Mahanagar, 382
The Maid, 597
Mainframe Films and Television Productions, 585
Main Hoon Na ("I'm Here Now"), 606
Maitland, Keith, 538
Les Maitres fous ("The Mad Masters"), 425
The Major and the Minor, 200
Majors, 186–187, 190, 193, 207, 210, 216, 287, 293, 297, 301, 312, 453–454, 460, 463, 470–471, 545, 580, 600, 602, 644–647, 645, 651–654, 662–663, 668, 673–676, 680–681, 683, 689, 694, 703, 706, 712–714. *See also* Big Five
  blockbusters and, 652
  financing from foreign sources, 680
  globalization and, 680–684
  and independent cinema, 674–675
  Netflix *vs.,* 714–715
  streaming services, 713–714
Makavejev, Dušan, 408–409, 419, 479, 491, 493, 501, 503
Makhmalbaf, Hana, 591
Makhmalbaf, Mohsen, 590–592
Makhmalbaf, Samira, 590–591
Makino, Masahiro, 163, 216
Makk, Karoly, 353, 409, 505
Ma l'amor mio non muore! ("But My Love Does Not Die!"), 48
Malaysia, 614–615
Malcolm X, 663
Maldoror, Sarah, 486–487
Male and Female, 64
Malick, Terrence, 458, 672
Malle, Louis, 393, 505
The Maltese Falcon, 198, 200, 205, 275, 328
Mama, 636
Mambéty, Djibril Diop, 488, 584
Mamma Roma, 397
Mamoulian, Rouben, 171, 191, 197, 198, 200–201
Manakamana, 540
A Man and a Woman, 396
The Man Between, 340
Manchester by the Sea, 714
Mandabi (The Money Order), 487
Manderlay, 688
Mandrin, 73
Manenti company, 241
A Man Escaped, 377
The Man from London, 570
Mangeshkar, Lata, 360
Manhatta, 154, 157–158, 266
Manhattan, 461
Manhattan Madness, 59
Manhunter, 663
Man Is Not a Bird, 408
Manitou's Shoe, 549
Mankiewicz, Joseph, 307
Man Looking Southeast, 594
Mann, Anthony, 287, 308
Mann, Michael, 663, 709
Man of Aran, 271, 272
A Man of Integrity, 591–592
Man of Iron, 568–569
Man of Marble, 568
Man of Steel, 654
Man on Fire, 661
The Man on the Tracks, 353
Man Push Cart, 689
Manuscripts Don't Burn, 591
The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934), 212
The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956), 306
The Man Who Laughs, 139
The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, 303
The Man Who Was Too Free, 521
Man with a Movie Camera, 110, 112, 117–118, 120, 159, 513, 520
The Man Without a Past, 552
The Man with the Golden Arm, 294
Le Marchand de plaisir ("The Seller of Pleasure"), 75
March of the Garter Snakes, 446
March of the Penguins, 525
Marclay, Christian, 542
Marey, Étienne-Jules, 5–6
Margin Call, 714
María Candelaria, 363–364
Maria Full of Grace, 593
Máriássy, Félix, 353
Marie-Octobre, 331
Marius, 252
Marker, Chris, 334, 424–425, 430–431, 483, 496, 501, 516, 518–519, 539
The Mark of Zorro, 132
Markopoulos, Gregory, 438–439, 441–442, 448, 459, 532
Marks, Greg, 712
Marquez, Gabriel García, 594
Marret, Mario, 496
The Marriage Circle, 126, 137, 163
The Marriage of Maria Braun, 552
Marriage Story, 715
A Married Couple, 513
A Married Woman, 391
Mars Attacks!, 666
La Marseillaise, 257–259, 526
Marseille, 557
Marshall, John, 422
Marshall, Penny, 662
Marston, Joshua, 593
Martel, Lucrecia, 597
The Martian, 685
The Martian VR, 719
Martin, Darnell, 662
Martin, Karl Heinz, 88
Martyrs of Love, 407
Marvel, 614, 650–651, 681
Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), 650, 652
Marvel franchise films, 650
Marx, Frederick, 525
Mary Jane's Mishap, 17
Mary Poppins, 292, 453
The Mascot, 281–282
Masculine-Feminine, 499
*M*A*S*H,* 456, 460–461
The Mask, 712
Mass, 443
Mass: For the Dakota Sioux, 441
The Master, 672, 705
The Master and Margarita, 491
Master, Mistress, and Servant, 361
Matador, 553
Matarazzo, Raffaelo, 244
Match Factory Girl, 552
La Maternelle, 252
Matewan, 672
The Matrix, 626, 653, 658, 705
The Matrix Reloaded, 718
Matrix trilogy, 51, 612, 665, 717
Matsushita, 621, 644, 647, 680
The Mattei Affair, 504
A Matter of Interpretation, 633
A Matter of Life and Death, 399
Les Mauvaises rencontres ("Bad Liaisons"), 394
Mauvais sang ("Bad Blood," aka *The Night Is Young*), 561
Max Linder series, 23
Max mon amour, 622
Maxwell, John, 181
Maya animation program, 700
Mayer, Carl, 92–94, 139

Mayerling, 251
Mayer, Louis B., 27, 186
May, Joe, 50
Maynila: In the Claws of Neon, 616, 617
Maysles, Albert, 426, 428, 513
Maysles, David, 426, 428, 513
Mazursky, Paul, 459
McAllister, Stewart, 276
McBride, Jim, 513–514
McCall, Anthony, 532–533, 542
McCarey, Leo, 186
McCay, Winsor, 31–32, 66
McG, 663
McLaren, Norman, 436
McLean, Greg, 612
Me and You and Everyone We Know, 672
Mean Girls, 652
Mean Streets, 468–470, 630, 668
Mechanics of the Brain, 109
Medea, 501
MEDIA, 547–548
Meditation on Violence, 434
Medium Cool, 459
Medvedkin, Alexander, 229
Meek's Cutoff, 668
Meerson, Lazare, 253, 255
Meet Me in St. Louis, 193, 200–201
Meet the Parents, 646
Mehra, Rakeysh Omprakash, 606
Mehrjui, Dariush, 589
Mehta, Ketan, 604
Meirelles, Fernando, 595–596
Mekas, Adolfas, 471
Mekas, Jonas, 432, 441, 444–445, 449, 471, 526, 531
Melancholia, 688
Méliès, Georges, 10, 13–15, 19, 69, 73
Melody Cruise, 194
Melville, Jean-Pierre, 335, 631
Melvin and Howard, 458
Memento, 665, 670–671
Mementos, 614
Memories of Murder, 633
Memories of Overdevelopment, 601
Memories of Underdevelopment, 478–482, 601
Memory, 587
Memory of Appearances: Life Is a Dream, 553–554
Memphis Belle, 274
Menace II Society, 662
Men and Jobs, 229
Men at Work, 591
Mendes, Sam, 661
Mendoza, Brillante, 617
Menilmontant, 75–76, 81, 83
Men in Black, 651, 658, 681
Menken, Marie, 278, 432, 436, 442
The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail, 348
Menzel, Jirí, 490–491, 568
Menzies, William Cameron, 211
Mephisto, 569
Mercanton, Louis, 52, 72
Merchant, Ismail, 668
The Merchant of Four Seasons, 509
Mères françaises ("French Mothers"), 52
The Mermaid, 639–640, 683
Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence, 622
Merry-Go-Round, 353
The Merry-Go-Round, 130
The Merry Widow, 130
Meshes of the Afternoon, 433, 438, 442
Meshkini, Marzieh, 590–591
The Messiah, 323
Messmer, Otto, 143
Mészáros, Márta, 492, 506–507, 569
meta-documentary, 518–519
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). 27, 57, 88, 96–97, 123–124, 130, 134–135, 137–138, 143, 170, 174, 183, 186–187, 189, 192–193, 198, 201, 203, 208, 213–214, 281, 287, 292, 296, 301, 375, 453–454, 463, 644–645, 647, 671, 680
Metropolis, 88, 92, 94, 96
Mexico, 363–364, 598–599
Meyerhold, Vsevolod, 108, 120, 229
Meyer, Russ, 471
Meyers, Sidney, 269
Mezhrabpom-Russ, 106
MGM. *See* Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
Miami Vice, 663
Michael (1924), 92–93, 149
Michael Moore in TrumpLand, 523
Micheaux Book and Film Company, 141
Micheaux, Oscar, 141, 190
Michurin, 349
The Middleman, 383
Middle of Nowhere, 674
Midnight Cowboy, 454, 456
Miéville, Anne-Marie, 500
Mifune, 687
The Mighty Ducks, 650
Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie, 612
Miike, Takashi, 623–624, 626
Mikaberidze, Kote, 110
Mikesch, Elfi, 536
Mikhalkov, Nikita, 493, 575–577
Mildred Pierce, 298
Milestone, Lewis, 206
Milestones, 497
Milius, John, 467, 471
The Milk of Sorrow, 598
Milky Way (2007), 570
The Milky Way (1969), 367
Milkyway Image, 630–631
Miller, George, 610, 612, 657
Miller's Crossing, 663
Millett, Kate, 496
Millhouse: A White Comedy, 497
Le Million, 180, 248–249
Million Dollar Baby, 469
Mimic, 599, 667
Minamata: The Victims and Their World, 495
Min and Bill, 187
Mingxing company, 226
Mini-Majors, 646, 653, 662, 668, 673
Ministry of Fear, 205
Minkin, Adolf, 234
Minnelli, Vincent, 187, 198, 200–201, 301, 303–304, 445
Minnie and Moskowitz, 472
Minnie the Moocher, 207
Minors, 186, 188–190, 207, 210, 287. *See also* Little Three
Mintz, Margaret J. Winkler, 142–143
The Miracle, 294, 323
Miracle in Milan, 316–317, 325
The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, 200
The Miracle of the Wolves, 73
The Miracle Worker, 455
Il Miracolo (The Miracle), 316
Miramax, 637, 646, 673, 674
Mirch Masala, 604
The Mirror (1975), 493, 573
The Mirror (1997), 590, 591
The Mirror of Illusion, 603
Les Misérables, 689
Misère au Borinage ("Misery in Borinage"), 268–269
Miss Bala, 600
Missing, 504
The Missing Picture, 520–521
The Mission, 631
Mission: Impossible, 649, 658
Mission: Impossible-Ghost Protocol, 568
Mission: Impossible II, 612, 630
Mission: Impossible III, 705
Mission: Impossible-Rogue Nation, 705
Mississippi Masala, 604, 689
Miss Julie, 338
Miss Lulu Bett, 136
Miss Mary, 596
Miss Mend, 119
Miss Mona, 689
Les Mistons ("The Brats"), 391

The Mistress of the World, 51
Mitry, Jean, 435
Mitsuko Delivers, 626
Miyazaki, Hayao, 615, 625–626
Mizoguchi, Kenji, 218, 220–223, 346–347, 397, 412, 414, 502–503, 619, 622
Moana (1926), 161, 272
Moana (2016), 614, 651
Moaz, Samuel, 587
Mo' Better Blues, 663
Modern Times, 196
Moebius, 633
Moholy-Nagy, László, 157–158
Moi un noir (Treichville), 425, 430
Moloch, 575
Moment of Innocence, 590
Momma Don't Allow, 423
Mommy, 708
Mona Lisa, 548
Monday, 622
Le Monde vivant ("The Living World"), 566
Monga, 621
Mongoloid, 541
Monkey Business, 202
Monkey Kingdom, 525
Monogram Pictures, 186, 190
Mon Oncle (My Uncle), 379–380
Mon oncle d'Amérique ("My American Uncle"), 554
Mon-Rak Transistor, 615
Monsieur Verdoux, 303
Monsoon Wedding, 604
Monster, 662
The Monster from the Ocean Floor, 297
Monster Hunt, 639
Monsters, Inc. series, 706
Monsters vs. Aliens, 704
Montagu, Ivor, 269
Monteiro, João César, 562
Monterey Pop, 428, 513
Moodysson, Lukas, 566
Moolaadé, 584
Moonbird, 292, 538
Moon in the Gutter, 561
The Moon Is Blue, 294, 296
Moonlight, 673, 676
Moonrise Kingdom, 669, 705
Moore, Michael, 522–526
Moreau, Jeanne, 507
Moretti, Nanni, 549
Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment, 400
Morin, Edgar, 429–430, 516
Morita, Yoshimitsu, 622
Morning for the Osone Family, 348
Morocco, 581
Morocco, 196
Morricone, Ennio, 398
Morris, Errol, 520, 523–524, 526
Morrissey, Paul, 447, 526
Mort en ce jardin, 368
Morvern Callar, 559
Mor-Vran, 83
Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears, 572
Moscow in October, 110–111
Moscow International Film Festival, 344
Moscow Strikes Back, 277
Moses and Aaron, 509
The Most Beautiful, 223
Mother (1926), 107, 109–112, 115–119, 148, 233
Mother (1952), 346
Mother (2009), 633
Mother and Son, 575
The Mother and the Whore, 551
Mother Courage and Her Children, 498
Mother India, 359
Mother Joan of the Angels, 405
Mother's Day, 438
motion capture, techniques for, 701
motion-control systems, 698
Motion Painting No. 1, 281
Motion Picture Association (MPA), 683
Motion Picture Association-América Latina, 593
Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), 294, 456, 681, 683, 693
Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA), 287, 310, 344, 483, 485
Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC), 28–31, 45, 51, 56
Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), 125, 175, 188–190, 200, 287
The Motorcycle Diaries, 597
Motorpsycho, 471
Mouchette, 377–378
Le Moulin maudit ("The Accursed Mill"), 34
Moulin Rouge!, 612
The Mountain Eagle, 146
The Mourning Forest, 623
Movie, 366
A Movie, 441
Movie-Movies, 446
Mozhukhin, Ivan (aka Moujoukine), 75, 76, 104
MPAA. *See* Motion Picture Association of America
MPPDA. *See* Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America
MP3 software format, 713
Mr. Arkadin, 305
Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House, 194
Mr. Bug Goes to Town (aka *Hoppity Goes to Town*), 208
Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr., 524
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town, 195, 202
Mr. Hulot's Holiday (Les Vacances de M. Hulot), 379–380
Mr. Turner, 551
MTV, 654, 663, 681
Mud and Soldiers, 222
Der müde Tod ("The Weary Death"), 88
Mulan, 650
Mulholland Drive, 669
Il Mulino del Po (The Mill on the Po River), 316
multiplexes and megaplexes, 654–655, 683–684
Mulvey, Laura, 536
Mumblecore group, 675
The Mummy (1932), 203
The Mummy (1959), 399
The Mummy (1999), 657
The Mummy (aka *The Night of Counting the Years*), 587
Muna Moto, 582
Mungiu, Cristian, 571
Munk, Andrzej, 353–354
Murata, Minoru, 163
Muratova, Kira, 404, 575
The Murderers Are Among Us, 352
Murders in the Rue Morgue, 159
Murdoch, Rupert, 454, 612, 646
Muriel, 394–395, 554
Muriel's Wedding, 611
Murmuring, 520
Murmur of Youth, 618
Murnau, F. W., 88, 91–92, 94–97, 124, 139, 146, 170, 272, 338, 363, 561
Murphy, Dudley, 153, 156–157, 436
Murphy, Geoff, 613
Murphy, J. J., 528
Muscle Beach Party, 297
museums, movies in, 541–542
musicals, 301, 467
Music Box, 504
Music Corporation of America (MCA), 295, 454, 621
Musicians, 431
The Music Man, 301, 453
The Music Room, 382
The Musketeers of Pig Alley, 136
Mussolini, Vittorio, 317
Mustang, 589

Mutiny on the Bounty, 454
Mutoscope, 10–11
Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück ("Mother Krausen's Journey to Happiness"), 148–149, 267
Mutual Appreciation, 675
Mutual company, 62, 65
Muybridge, Eadweard, 5
My Ain Folk, 550
My Beautiful Laundrette, 546
My Big Fat Greek Wedding, 652, 675
My Brilliant Career, 610
My Childhood, 550–551
My Darling Clementine, 296, 303
My Fair Lady, 301
My Friend Boris Nemtsov, 521
My Friend Ivan Lapshin, 573–574
My Grandmother, 110, 112, 116
My Hustler, 448
My Intimate Eros: Love Song 1974, 514
My Joy, 577
My Life, 357–358
My Man Godfrey, 202
My Neighbor Totoro, 625
My Night at Maud's, 392
My Own Breathing, 520
My Own Private Idaho, 668–669, 673
Les Mystères de New York, 52
Mysteries of Lisbon, 554
Mysteriet natten till den 25:e ("Mysterious Night of the 25th"), 54
Mysterious Object at Noon, 615
The Mysterious X, 44, 53
The Mystery of Oberwald, 376
Mystery Road, 613
Mystery Train, 673
Mystic Pizza, 674
Mystic River, 469
My Story, 604
My Sweet Little Village, 568
My Universities, 233
My Way Home (1965), 409
My Way Home (1977), 550

N

Nagasaki, Shunichi, 535
Nagata, Masaichi, 221, 345–346
Nagra company, 427
Nair, Mira, 604, 689
La Naissance de l'amour ("The Birth of Love"), 550
La Naissance, la vie et la mort de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ ("The Birth, Life, and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ"), 23
Najjar, Najwa, 587
Naked, 551
The Naked City, 299, 305
The Naked Gun, 656
The Naked Kiss, 308
The Naked Spur, 300
Name the Man, 138
Nang Nak, 615
Naniwa Elegy, 220–221
Nanook of the North, 161–162, 271
Napoléon vu par Abel Gance ("Napoléon as Seen by Abel Gance"), 75, 78–81, 84, 96, 149, 150
Naranjo, Gerardo, 600
Narcos, 600
Narkompros, 102–103, 105, 109–110, 120–121
Naruse, Mikio, 217, 222, 346
Nashville, 453, 461, 556, 659, 672
Natasha, 577
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), 63
National Center for Cinema, Romania, 571
National Film Board (NFB), Canada, 423, 428–429
National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), 604–605
National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC), Britain, 311, 339
National Film Institute (INC), Argentina, 596
National Gallery, 514
National Institute for Cinema and Audiovisual Arts (INCAA), 596–597
National Treasure, 657
Native Land, 266, 426
Natural Born Killers, 663
Nausicaä of the Valley of the Winds, 625
Naval Battle of 1894, 357
Navas, Jorge, 598
La Nave Bianca ("The White Ship"), 244–245
Navia, Oscar Ruiz, 598
The Navigator, 133–134
The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey, 613
Nawara, 588
Nayagan ("Hero"), 604
Nazarin, 367
The Nazis Strike, 274
NBC Universal, 647, 716
Near Death, 515
The Needle, 574
Negri, Pola, 87
Neighboring Sounds, 596
Nekas, Dore O., 536
Nemec, Jan, 407, 490, 491
Nemes, László, 570
Nénette et Boni, 559
Nerone, 244
Neruda, 598
Nerven ("Nerves"), 60– 61
Netflix, 526, 585, 597, 600, 651, 676, 692, 710, 713–716
  vs. Majors, 714–715
Netherlands, 268
Never Rarely Sometimes Always, 669
The New Babylon, 110, 112, 118
new cinema trends, 385–389
  Australia, 610–613
  Brazil, 415–419
  East Asia, 614–621
  Eastern Europe, 404–412
  France, 389–396
  Germany, 401–402
  Great Britain, 398–401
  Italy, 396–398
  Japan, 412–415
  New Zealand, 613–614
  Soviet Union, 402–404
New Earth, 268
New Film Group, 589
New Line Cinema, 673, 694
Newman's Laugh-O-Grams, 143
Newmeyer, Fred, 133
"New New Hollywood," 662
"New Nollywood," 585
New Objectivity, 97–99
The New One-Armed Swordsman, 627
News Corporation, 680–681
Newsfront, 610
Newsreel group, 453, 495, 496, 518
New Tales of the Taira Clan, 347
The New World, 672
New World Pictures, 471
The New Year's Sacrifice, 357, 634
New York, 607
New York Motion Picture Company, 28
New York, New York, 467, 469
New Zealand, 613–614
New Zealand Film Commission, 613–614
Ne Zha, 639
Ngati, 613
Die Nibelungen, 88, 92, 94, 151
Niblo, Fred, 128, 132
Nichols, Jeff, 671
Nichols, Mike, 459
nickelodeon boom, 26–27
Niemeyer, Erna, 153
Niépce, Claude, 4
Nigeria, 584
Night Across the Street, 554
Night and Fog in Japan, 413–414

Nightcats, 442
The Nightingale, 612
Nightly Dreams, 217
Night Mail, 273
The Nightmare Before Christmas, 666, 707
A Nightmare on Elm Street, 668
Nightmare on Elm Street franchise, 673
Night of Revenge, 53
Night of the Living Dead, 471
The Night of the Party, 213
Night of the Shooting Stars, 549
Night on Bald Mountain, 280
Night on Earth, 673
Night Shapes, 556
Nights of Cabiria, 375, 397
Night Train, 353
Night Watch, 576
Nikita, 549, 561, 686
Nikkatsu company, 162–163, 182, 216, 218, 415
Nilsson, Rob, 472
Nine Days of One Year, 402
Nine Months, 506
Nine Queens, 593
9 Songs, 566
1941, 463
1917, 661, 718
Ninotchka, 197, 200
Nixon, 663
Nnebue, Kenneth, 585
No, 598
Nobody Knows, 626
No Country for Old Men, 663
Noda, Kogo, 347
Noë, Gaspar, 566
Noi vivi (We the Living), 243
Nolan, Christopher, 665–666, 670, 674, 705
Nollywood, 585–586
Non-Stop, 657
Noonan, Chris, 611
Nordisk company, 25, 27–28, 52–53, 149
No Regrets for Our Youth, 371
Norma Rae, 668
Norte, the End of History, 617
North by Northwest, 296, 306
Northern Lights, 472
North Sea, 274
À nos amours, 551
The Nose, 440, 441
Nosferatu, 88, 91–92, 146, 338, 561
Nosotras, 557, 559
Nostalghia, 573
(nostalgia), 527, 535
Nostalgia for the Light, 520–521
Not a Love Story, 518
Not Reconciled, 401–402, 508, 509
Notre Musique, 563
La Notte ("The Night"), 375–376
Noujaim, Jehane, 588
À nous deux, France ("Let's Go, France!"), 487
À nous, la liberté! ("For Us, Liberty"), 180–181, 248, 255
Nous ne vieillirons pas ensemble ("We Won't Grow Old Together"), 551
Nous sommes tous des assassins ("We Are All Killers"), 330
Nouveau Roman ("New Novel"), 558
Nouvelle Vague ("New Wave"), 389, 563
Now!, 479
Noyce, Philip, 610
Nude Restaurant, 447
La Nuit américaine (Day for Night), 392, 554
Nuit et brouillard (Night and Fog), 424, 441, 516
Nuit et jour ("Night and Day"), 558
La Nuit fantastique ("The Fantastic Night"), 262
Nuñez, Victor, 472, 670
The Nutty Professor, 454
Nymphomaniac, 688
N.Y., N.Y., 422

O

Oasis, 633
Objective Burma, 206
O Brother, Where Art Thou?, 663, 699
Obsession, 467
The Obsession, 603
The Obstinate Memory, 520
Ocean's Eleven, 649, 666
October (aka *Ten Days That Shook the World*), 109–116, 179, 508
October 1 (2014), 585
Octobre à Madrid ("October in Madrid"), 519
Odd Man Out, 340
Odd Obsession, 348
O Dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro ("The Evil Dragon *versus* the Holy Saint"), 418
O Dreamland, 423
The Official Story, 596
Offscreen, 708
Offside, 591
Of Great Events and Ordinary People, 518–519
Of Oz the Wizard, 541–542
Ogorodnikov, Valery, 574
Oh! What a Lovely War, 498
Oh, Wonderful Life, 222
Oki's Movie, 633
Okja, 633
Oklahoma!, 289–290, 295
Old and New (aka *The General Line*), 109–110, 117–119
Oldboy, 633
Old Czech Legends, 440
The Old Dark House, 203
Old Ironsides, 708
Old Joy, 668
The Old Mill, 207
Old School, 646
The Old Well, 635
Old Yeller, 293
Olive, 707
Oliveira, Manoel de, 278, 562
Oliver, Harry, 139
Oliver Twist, 339–340
Olivier, Laurence, 215, 339
Olmi, Ermanno, 396, 549
Olsen, Ole, 25, 52
O Lucky Man!, 498
Olympia, 238–239, 241
Omkara, 607
Om Shanti Om, 607
Onan, 449
Once There Was a Girl, 235
Once Upon a Time in Anatolia, 589
Once upon a Time in China, 629
Once Upon a Time. . . in Hollywood, 669, 705
Once Upon a Time in Mexico, 697
Once Were Warriors, 613–614
One-Armed Swordsman, 626, 630
One Day, 550
One Day in Europe, 557
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, 460
One Froggy Evening, 292
One from the Heart, 464, 561
101 Dalmatians, 453–454
One Plus One (aka *Sympathy for the Devil*), 499
One Sings, the Other Doesn't, 507
One Way Boogie Woogie, 535
Ong Bak, 616
online film culture, 712–713
Only Angels Have Wings, 189, 195–196, 198
The Only Son, 219
Ono, Yoko, 528
On purge Bébé, 254
On the Bowery, 298
On the Hunting Ground, 635
The On-the-Square Girl, 59
On the Town, 301
On the Waterfront, 307

Open City, 243, 293, 315–317, 319, 321, 323, 325–326
Open Hearts, 550
Opening Night, 472
Operación masacre ("Operation Massacre"), 483
Opera Jawa, 614
Operation Red Sea, 639
Ophélia, 390
Ophüls, Marcel, 517
Ophüls, Max, 177–178, 221, 237, 242–243, 251, 304, 314–315, 331–332, 334, 366, 393, 517
Opium War, 592
Oppenheimer, Joshua, 522
Ordet (The Word), 337
Orfeu, 595
The Original Kings of Comedy, 663
Orion, 646
Orlacs Hände (The Hands of Orlac), 88
Orly, 556
Orphans of the Storm, 129
Orphée, 334
Osama, 592
Osanai, Kaoru, 163
Osborne, John, 399
Os Cafajestes ("The Loafers"), 417
Oscar and Lucinda, 611–612
Oscars, 131, 189, 207, 295, 342, 369, 547–548, 553, 595, 664
Os Fuzis ("The Guns"), 417, 478
Oshima, Nagisa, 387, 412–415, 419, 449, 498, 500, 503, 518, 622
Ossessione, 245, 315, 317
Ossos, 553
Othello, 305, 607
The Other Side of the Wind, 305
Othon, 509
Otomo, Katsuhiro, 624
Ottinger, Ulrike, 563
Our Daily Bread (1934), 203
Our Daily Bread (2005), 539
Our Little Sister, 626
Our Neighbor Miss Yae, 217
Our Town, 688
Out 1, 393
An Outcast of the Islands, 340
Outer Space, 533
The Outlaw and His Wife, 56
The Outlaw Josey Wales, 469
Out of Sight, 666
Out of the Past, 302
Outrage trilogy, 626
The Outsiders, 464
Oxhide, 539
Oxhide II, 539
Oyuki the Madonna, 220–221
Ozep, Fyodor, 119
Ozon, François, 550
Ozu, Yasujiro, 218–223, 346–348, 412, 414, 500, 503, 561, 622, 626, 667

P

Pabst, G. W., 88, 90, 97–99, 151, 176, 178, 251
Pacific 231, 435
Pacific Data Images (PDI), 706
Pacific Rim, 667
Padilha, José, 596
Padre padrone, 506–507, 549
Page 3, 607
A Page of Madness, 148–149, 163
Pagnol, Marcel, 252
Paik, Nam June, 446
The Painted Lady, 40–41
The Painted Veil, 174
Paint Your Wagon, 454
Paisan, 316–317, 319, 323, 325, 372, 479
The Pajama Game, 301
Pakula, Alan J., 459
Palace and Fortress, 105–106
Palcy, Euzhan, 662
Pale Flower, 414
Palermi, Amleto, 244
Paley, Nina, 706
Pálfi, Györgi, 570
Pal, George, 302
Palombella Rossa, 549
Panaflex, 457
Panahi, Jafar, 590–591, 707
Panavision company, 457
Pandora's Box (aka *Lulu*), 98
Pane, amore e fantasia (Bread, Love, and Dreams), 316, 322
Pang, Danny, 615
Pang, Oxide, 615
Panic in Needle Park, 669
Panic Room, 710
Panique, 331
Pan's Labyrinth, 600, 667
Pan Wenzhan, 489
Papas Kino ("Papa's cinema"), 311
Papatakis, Niko, 393
Paper Flowers, 361
The Paper Will Be Blue, 571
Papic, Krsto, 491
Parabola, 281
paracinema, 532–533
Parade, 380
Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills, 521
Paradise Now, 548
Paradzhanov, Sergei, 404, 493, 574
The Parallax View, 453, 459
Paramount, 27, 57–58, 88, 94, 96–97, 123, 128–131, 135–137, 143, 161, 170, 179, 183, 186–189, 200, 207, 208, 211, 248, 252, 270, 286–287, 289, 295–296, 301–303, 339, 453, 458, 460, 463–464, 470, 611, 644–647, 653, 674, 680, 681
Paramount case, 286–287
Paramount-Publix, 123–124
Paramount Vantage, 674
Paranoid Park, 662
Paranormal Activity, 656, 668, 676, 708
Paranormal Activity: The Lost Soul, 719
ParaNorman, 706
Parasite, 633–634
Paravel, Véréna, 540
Paris, 151, 494
Paris Belongs to Us, 390, 393
Paris qui dort ("Sleeping Paris"), 73
Park Chan-wook, 633
Parker, Albert, 132
Parker, Claire, 280, 440
Park, Nick, 547
Parks, Sr., Gordon, 471
Parsifal, 562
The Parson's Widow, 149
Participant Productions, 675
Une Partie de campagne (A Day in the Country), 254
Parufamet, 96
Pascal Duarte, 505
Pascal, Gabriel, 339
Pasolini, Pier Paolo, 397, 501
Les Passagers, 556
The Passenger, 354, 375, 506
Passer, Ivan, 406, 491
Passe ton bac d'abord ("First Get Your Degree"), 551
Passing Fancy, 219
Passing Summer, 556
Passion (1920), 93, 137
Passion (1982), 563
Passion (1998), 570
The Passion According to Berenice, 598
The Passion of Joan of Arc, 149–150, 279, 337
The Passion Play of Oberammergau, 18
Passport to Pimlico, 341
The Past, 689
Pasternak, Boris, 402
Pasteur, 76
Pastorale, 492
Pastrone, Giovanni, 24, 44, 48
Patagonik, 593
Paterson, 673
Pathé, Charles, 13, 76

Pathé-Cinéma, 261
Pathé Exchange, 161
Pathé Frères, 13, 20, 22–23, 25–28, 31, 35, 37, 39, 41, 49–52, 57, 69, 72–73, 76, 84, 136, 249, 260, 327, 329, 421, 684
Pathé-Natan, 84, 248
Pather Panchali ("Song of the Little Road"), 362, 382–383
The Patriot, 137
Patton, 457, 460
Paul, R. W., 9–10, 13–14, 16
Pavlović, Zika, 491
The Pawnbroker, 455–456
The Pawnshop, 65
Peacock, 638
Peake, Peter, 547
Peak TV, 675
Peckinpah, Sam, 301, 456
Peele, Jordan, 656, 676
Peeping Tom, 342, 399, 610
Pee-Wee's Big Adventure, 658–659
Peggy and Fred in Hell series, 534
Peirce, Kimberly, 670
Peking Opera Blues, 629
Películas Nacionales, 599
The Penal Colony, 485
Penn, Arthur, 308, 455, 456
Pennebaker, Don, 426, 428, 513
Pension Mimosas, 253
People of the Cumberland, 266
People's Commissariat of Education. *See* Narkompros
Pépé le Moko, 253
Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls in the Neighborhood, 526
Peppermint Candy, 633
Perceval le gallois, 561
Pereira dos Santos, Nelson, 362, 417
Perestiani, Ivan, 105
Pérez, Fernando, 601
Perfect Blue, 625
The Perfect Human, 539
Performance, 554
The Perils of Pauline, 50–52
Perrault, Pierre, 429, 496
Perret, Léonce, 44, 51, 136
Perry, Tyler, 646, 662
Persepolis, 690–691
Persona, 369–371, 377
The Personals, 618
Perugini, Frank, 141
Peter Pan (2003), 612
Peters, Jon, 653
Peterson, Sidney, 438, 442
Peter the Great, 232, 236
Le Petit café, 74
La Petite Lise ("Little Lise"), 180, 253, 262
La Petite marchande d'allumettes (The Little Match Girl), 75
Le Petit lieutenant, 548
Petrograd Cinema Committee, 102
Petrovic, Aleksandar, 408, 491
Petrov, Vladimir, 232
Petulia, 458–459
Petzold, Christian, 555–556
Phalke, D. G., 42, 43
The Phantom Chariot, 56
Phantom Lady, 205
The Phantom Menace, 700
The Phantom of Liberty, 501
The Phantom of the Opera, 135, 139
Phantom rides, 16
Phantom Thread, 672
Phantoscope projector, 10
Pharaoh, 405
The Pharaoh's Belt, 534
Phenakistoscope, 4
The Philadelphia Story, 201
Philippines, 616–617
Phillips, Todd, 470
Phoenix, 555–556
Photo-Chemical Laboratories (PCL), 182
photogénie, concept of, 77
Photophone, 170–171, 182, 186
Pi, 674
Pialat, Maurice, 551, 561
La Pianiste (The Piano Player), 566
The Piano, 613
Pib and Pog, 547
Pichul, Vasily, 574
Pickford, Mary, 30, 40, 45, 57, 61, 65, 125, 137, 189, 295
Pick, Lupu, 92
Pickpocket, 377–379
Pickup on South Street, 286, 308
Picnic at Hanging Rock, 610
Picnic on the Grass, 333
Pie in the Sky, 266
Pietà, 633
Pigpen, 501
Pigs and Battleships, 415
Pillow Talk, 455
Pilotone system, 427
Pinewood Studios, 211–212
Pink Flamingos, 471, 526
Pinocchio, 207
Pintilie, Lucian, 571
Pioneer Pictures, 193
Piotrovsky, Adrian, 231
Pippa Passes, 29
piracy, 692–693
  downloading *vs.,* 713
The Pirate's Fiancée (aka *A Very Curious Girl*), 507
Pirates of the Caribbean, 649–650, 652
Pirates of the Caribbean franchise, 681–682
Pirosmani, 492
Pittaluga, Stefano, 241
Pixar, 651, 658, 681, 699–700, 706
pixilation, 31
Pixote, 593, 594
A Place in Heaven, 587
Plaff, 601
Le Plaisir, 314, 331
Planet of the Apes, 666
Planet of the Apes franchise, 614
Plan for Great Works, 178
Plan 9 from Outer Space, 297
Plateau, Joseph, 4
Platform, 638
Platoon, 674
The Player, 461, 674
Play Misty for Me, 469
Play Time, 379–381
Pleasantville, 699
The Pleasure Garden, 146
The Plow That Broke the Plains, 270
Pocahontas, 650, 706
Poet and Tsar, 120
Poetic Realism, 252–255
Point Break, 662
La Pointe courte, 335, 394
Point of Order, 422, 497
point-of-view shots, 59
Poison, 541, 673
Pokniek, Juris, 520
Poland, 353, 405–406, 492, 567–569
Polanski, Roman, 405, 457, 549
Police, 218
Police, Adjective, 571
A Policeman's Love Affair, 34
Police Python 357, 548
Police Story, 629
Polidor coi baffi ("Polidor's Moustache"), 24
Polikushka, 103
Polish School, 353–354
political modernism, 497–503
Pollack, Sydney, 459
Polyester, 668
Pommer, Erich, 88, 93, 96–97, 137, 146
Le Pont des arts, 566
Pontecorvo, Gillo, 396
Ponti, Carlo, 322
Popeye, 461
Porky's, 656
The Pornographers, 415
Porter, Edwin S., 19–21, 34

Les Portes de la nuit ("Gates of the Night"), 329–330
Porto, 244
Le Portrait de l'amiral, 165
Portrait of a Lady on Fire, 560
Portrait of Jason, 496–497, 513, 520
Portugal, 147
Porumboiu, Corneliu, 571
The Poseidon Adventure, 457
Positif, 328, 366
Possessed, 298
The Postman Always Rings Twice, 245
Potter, Sally, 536
A Pot Worth a Million Ryo, 216
Pour la suite du monde ("For the Rest of the World," aka *Moontrap*), 429
Pousse-pousse, 582
Poverty Row firm, 186
Powell, Michael, 213, 215–216, 340–342, 399, 610
The Power and the Glory, 200
Power and the Land, 270
The Power of Kangwon Province, 632
The Power of Nightmares, 526
A Prairie Home Companion, 461, 701
Praxinoscope, 6
Preempting Dissent-Open Sourcing Secrecy, 713
Prelude: Dog Star Man, 443
Prelude to War, 274
Preminger, Otto, 200, 205, 286, 294, 296, 304–305, 307, 390
The President, 149
Pressburger, Emeric, 215–216, 294, 340–342
The Prestige, 665
Pretty Woman, 656
Prévert, Jacques, 255
Prévert, Pierre, 248–249, 262, 505
previs techniques, 698–699
The Price of Liberty, 582
Primary, 426–427, 429
Primer, 671
The Prince of Egypt, 705
Princess Mononoke, 625
Princess Raccoon, 624
The Principal Enemy, 486
Print Generation, 528
Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, 611
La Prise du pouvoir par Louis XIV (The Rise to Power of Louis XIV), 323
Prishvin's Paper Eyes, 574
The Private Eyes, 628
The Private Life of Henry VIII, 190, 211, 252
Producers Distributing Corporation, 124, 170
Professor Hannibal, 353
Professor Mamlock, 234
Project A, 629
Project A-Ko, 624
Prometheus, 267
Promio, Eugène, 13, 21
The Promise (1995), 558
The Promise (2005), 637
The Promised Land, 485
À propos de Nice ("Concerning Nice"), 249
The Proposition, 612
Prospero's Books, 555
Protazanov, Yakov, 49, 102
Providence, 554
Proyas, Alex, 612
Prunella, 63
Psyche, 438
Psycho, 296, 303, 306, 467, 542
PTU, 631
Public Enemy (1989), 383
The Public Enemy (1931), 188, 196, 204–205
Public Housing, 514
Pudovkin, Vsevolod, 106–107, 109–112, 115, 117, 120–121, 148, 178–179, 232, 233, 235, 349
Puenzo, Luis, 596
Pugh, Casey, 695
Puiu, Cristi, 571
Pull My Daisy, 435, 439
Pulp Fiction, 658, 669, 673, 674
Punch-Drunk Love, 672
Die Puppe ("The Doll"), 87
The Puppetmaster, 619
The Purchased Dream, 507
Purge, 676
Pushing Hands, 620
Putting Pants on Philip, 134
Pyriev, Ivan, 234

Q

Quai des brumes, 245, 253, 255
Quai des orfèvres, 330
Québec-USA, 429
Queen Christina, 194
Queen Elizabeth, 30, 57
Queen Kelly, 130
Que la bête meure (This Man Must Die), 390
Querelle, 552
Qué viva Mexico!, 364
The Quiet Earth, 613
The Quiet Man, 296, 303
The Quince Tree Sun, 562–563
Quo Vadis? (1913), 48, 62, 86
Quo Vadis? (1923), 164–165
Quo Vadis? (1951), 301

R

Rabbit Hole, 668
Rabid, 471
Rabin, the Last Day, 586
Racetrack, 514
Radio Corporation of America (RCA), 170–171, 181–182, 186–187
Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO). 125, 171, 175, 186–187, 193, 199, 203, 205, 207, 287–288, 292–293, 296, 305
Rafelson, Bob, 458–459
Rafferty, Kevin, 518
Rafferty, Pierce, 518
Raff, Norman, 10
Raging Bull, 469–470
Rahn, Bruno, 97–98
Raiders of the Lost Ark, 51, 464–465, 657, 712
Raiders of the Lost Ark: The Adaptation, 695
The Raid: Redemption, 615
Rain, 158–159, 268, 436
The Rainbow, 235
Rainbow Dance, 281
Raincoat, 607
Rainer, Yvonne, 534–535
Rain Man, 662
The Rain People, 460
Raising Arizona, 663
Raja Harishchandra, 42–43
Raman Hui, 639
Ramayana, 224
Rambo, 657
Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen, 531–532
Ramsay, Lynne, 559
Ran, 372–373, 622
Rancho Notorious, 304
La Rançon d'une alliance ("The Price of a Union"), 487
Randolph, Marc, 713
Rang De Basanti ("Paint Me with the Colors of Spring"), 606
Rank, J. Arthur, 211, 213–215
Rank Organization, 338–339
Ra.One, 606
Rapf, Harry, 186
Rappoport, Herbert, 234
The Rapture, 673
Les Raquetteurs ("The Snowshoers"), 429
Rasheed, Oday, 592
Rashomon, 345, 348, 371–372, 397
Raskolnikow, 88, 90
Rasoulof, Mohammad, 591–592
Ratanaruang, Pen-ek, 615
Ratcatcher, 559

Ratnam, Mani, 604–606
Ratner, Brett, 663
Rat Trap, 604
Ray, Man, 154–156
Ray, Nicholas, 307
Ray, Satyajit, 362, 364, 366, 374, 381–383, 603–604, 607, 619
RCA. *See* Radio Corporation of America
Ready Player One, 650, 719
Rear Window, 306
Reason, Argument, and Tale, 603
Reassemblage, 519
Rebecca, 190, 200, 212, 672
The Rebel, 615
The Rebels, 476
Rebel without a Cause, 307
Reconstruction, 502–503, 555
Record of a Living Being (aka *I Live in Fear*), 371
Record of a Tenement Gentleman, 347
REcreation, 437
Red, 569
The Red and the White, 409–411
Red Beard, 372–373
Red Cliff, 631, 637
Red Desert, 375–376
The Red Detachment of Women (1961), 357–358
The Red Detachment of Women (1971), 489
Redford, Robert, 662
Red-Headed Woman, 188
Red Imps, 105
Red Light Bandit, 419
Red Psalm, 502
Red River, 300–301
The Red Shoes, 294, 340, 342, 399
Red Sorghum, 635–636
The Red Turtle, 547
Reed, Carol, 340
Reed: Insurgent Mexico, 598
Reeves, Jennifer Todd, 537
Reflections on Black, 439
Regain (Harvest), 252
Regard sur la folie, 430, 520
Regeneration, 64, 136
La Région centrale (Central Region), 529
Reichardt, Kelly, 668, 670
Reichert, Julia, 496, 526
Reidemeister, Helga, 507
Reimann, Walter, 97
Reinert, Robert, 60
Reinhardt, Max, 47, 92
Reiniger, Lotte, 153, 280
Reisz, Karel, 399, 423
Rekhviashvili, Alexander, 574
The Remains of the Day, 668
Renaissance, 436
RenderMan program, 700, 706
Les Rendez-vous d'Anna ("Anna's Appointments"), 557
Renoir, Jean, 75–76, 78, 130, 180, 244, 247, 253–255, 257–260, 304, 321–322, 331–335, 366, 382, 386, 391, 550
Repast, 346
Repentance, 572, 574
Report, 443–444
Reporters, 516
Report on the Party and the Guests, 407– 408, 491
Republic Pictures, 186, 190
Rescued by Rover, 26, 37–38
The Rescuers, 454
Reservoir Dogs, 607, 660, 669, 673
Resident Evil, 689
Resnais, Alain, 334, 387, 393–395, 397, 407–408, 419, 423–425, 459, 479, 481, 494, 510, 516, 554–555
Restoration, 587
The Restricted Boy, 572
Resurrectio, 244
Resurrection of the Little Match Girl, 718
Le Retour, 422
Le Retour à la raison ("Return to Reason"), 154
The Return of the King, 717
The Return of the Secaucus Seven, 668, 672
The Revenant, 661, 664
The Revenge of a Kinematograph Cameraman, 32
Revenge of the Nerds, 656
Revolt of the Gladiators, 322
The Revolutionary (1917), 102
The Revolutionary (1970), 459
Revolutions Happen Like Refrains in a Song, 520
La Revue du cinéma, 328, 365
Reygadas, Carlos, 599
Reynaud, Émile, 6
Rhythmus 21, 152
Rhythmus series, 153–154
Rice, Ron, 440
Richard III, 339
Richardson, Tony, 399, 423
The Rich Bride, 234
Richter, Hans, 152–154, 277, 432
Rickshaw Boy, 634
Riddance, 506
Riddles of the Sphinx, 536
Le Rideau cramoisi ("The Crimson Curtain"), 335
The Rider, 670
Riefenstahl, Leni, 238–239, 241, 274, 311, 508
Rien que les heures ("Nothing but the Hours"), 157–158, 273
Riff-Raff, 551
"Rigadin" films, 23
Riggs, Marlon, 539–540
Righelli, Gennaro, 243
Rimmer, David, 528
The Ring (1927), 84, 148–149
The Ring (1998), 615, 624
The Ring (2002), 656
The Rink, 65
Rio Bravo, 300–301, 467
Rio 40 Degrees, 362, 416
Río Escondido ("Hidden River"), 363
Rio Grande, 303
Rio, Northern Zone, 362
Rippert, Otto, 50
Ripstein, Arturo, 598
The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, 498
Rise of the Planet of the Apes, 702
Rithy Panh, 520
Ritter, Karl, 239
Ritt, Martin, 308
Ritual in Transfigured Time, 434, 519, 539–540
The River (1937), 270
The River (1951), 332–333, 382
The River (1997), 620
River Queen, 614
Rivers, Ben, 539
Rivette, Jacques, 393, 562
RKO. *See* Radio-Keith-Orpheum.
Roach, Hal, 65, 134
roadshow pictures, 294–295
The Road Warrior, 609, 611
The Roaring Twenties, 198
Robbe-Grillet, Alain, 395, 397, 407, 558
The Robe, 288, 290, 302
Robison, Arthur, 88
Robson, Mark, 203
Rocco and His Brothers, 322
Rocha, Glauber, 416–419, 477, 485, 488
Rock around the Clock, 301
rockumentaries, 513
Rocky, 462, 463
The Rocky Horror Picture Show, 471
Rocky series, 662
Rodriguez, Robert, 674
Roeg, Nicholas, 554
Roger & Me, 522–523
Rogosin, Lionel, 298
Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, 651
Rohmer, Eric, 366, 392–393, 550, 561
The Role, 603

Roma (1972), 374
Roma (2018), 600, 714–715
Romance, 559, 566
Romance Joe, 633
A Romance of Happy Valley, 63
Le Roman de Werther ("The Romance of Werther"), 251
Le Roman d'un mousse ("Tale of a Cabin Boy"), 51
Le Roman d'un tricheur (The Story of a Cheat), 250–251
Romania, 571–572
Roma ore 11 (Rome 11 O'Clock), 316
Romeo + Juliet, 612
Romero, Eddie, 616
Romero, George, 471
Rome Wants Another Caesar, 502
Romm, Mikhail, 349, 402
La Ronde, 331–333
The Rooftops, 584
Room, Abram, 178
Room at the Top, 399
Rope, 306
Rosa Luxembourg, 558
Rose-France, 75–76, 78
Rose Hobart, 279, 441, 501
Rosemary's Baby, 468
Roses for the State Prosecutor, 311
Rosetta, 551
Rosi, Francesco, 323, 396, 504
Rosita, 137
Rossellini, Roberto, 243–245, 293–294, 315–317, 319, 321–324, 366, 405, 419, 479
Rossen, Robert, 307
Rossif, Frédéric, 422
Rot, Dieter, 436
rotoscoping, 142
Rouch, Jean, 425–427, 429–430, 513, 518
La Roue ("The Wheel"), 75, 78, 80–81, 114
Rouge, 630
Rough Sea at Dover, 9, 10
The Round-Up, 409–410
Rouquier, Georges, 421
Rowling, J. K., 694–695
Royal Photographic Society, 9
The Royal Tenenbaums, 669
Roy, Bimal, 359
Rubbo, Michael, 519
Rubin, Barbara, 445
Ruby in Paradise, 670
Ruiz, Raúl, 484–485, 518–519, 553–554, 562, 597
The Rules of Attraction, 700
The Rules of the Game, 254–257, 321, 333
Rumble Fish, 464, 561
Run, 584
The Runaway, 361
The Runaway Horse, 37, 40
Run Lola Run, 555
Une ruse de mari ("The Husband's Ruse"), 23
Rush Hour, 629
Rushmore, 669
Rush to Judgment, 497
Ruspoli, Mario, 430, 520
Russ company, 103
Russell, David O., 470, 672, 674
Russia, 32, 46, 101–103, 492, 680–681, 684, 692, 704. *See also* Soviet Union
  fall of communism and, influence on, 572, 576–578
  Glasnost and, 573–576
  multiplexing, 684
  1910s, 48–49
  1970s and 1980s, 572–578
  Pathé Frères and, 23
  perestroika and, 573–574
  poetic cinema, 492
  World War I era, 48–49
Russian Ark, 575, 708
The Russia of Nicholas II and Leo Tolstoy, 162
Ruttmann Opus 3, 152
Ruttmann Opus 4, 152
Ruttmann, Walter, 152–154, 158, 244, 277, 436, 538
Ryan, 538
Rye, Stellan, 44, 47

S

Sabotage, 212–213
"Sabu" (Hiroyuki Tanaka), 622
Sachs, Jen, 538
The Sacrifice, 573
Sadkovich, N., 235
Safe, 673
Safety Last, 133
Sagan, Leontine, 177–178
The Saga of Anatahan, 303
A Sailor-Made Man, 133
Salaam Bombay!, 604
Salaam Cinema, 590
Salam, Chadi Abdel, 587
Saleh, Tewfik, 476
The Salesman, 513, 591
Salles, Walter, 595, 597
Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom, 501
Salt for Svanetia, 162
Salt of the Earth, 297
The Salvation Hunters, 136
Salvatore Giuliano, 396, 504
SA-Mann Brand, 238
Samaritan Girl, 633
Sambizanga, 487
Samb-Makharam, Ababakar, 582
Le Samouraï ("The Samurai"), 335
Samson and Delilah (1949), 301
Samson & Delilah (2009), 612–613
Samuel Goldwyn Productions, 186
Sanborn, Keith, 536
Sandberg, David F., 713
Sander, Helke, 558
Sanders-Brahms, Helma, 509
Sandrich, Mark, 201
The Sandwich Man, 618–619
Sangam, 360
Le Sang des bêtes (Blood of the Beasts), 424
Sang Hu, 357
Sanjinés, Jorge, 485
San Mao, the Little Vagabond, 356
Sanshiro Sugata, 223, 372–373
Sanshiro Sugata II, 223
Sansho the Bailiff, 346–347
Sans Soleil (Sun Less), 519
Sant Tukaram, 225
Saraband, 369
Sarafina!, 584
Sarnoff, David, 171
Sartov, Hendrik, 126
Sasanatieng, Wisit, 615
Sascha firm, 165
Satan's Tango, 570
The Satin Slipper, 562
Satrapi, Marjane, 690
Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, 399–400
Saturday Night Fever, 462, 467, 598
Satya ("Truthful"), 607
Satyricon, 374, 506
Saura, Carlos, 387, 505, 549, 596
Sausage Party, 675
Sausalito, 422
Sauve qui peut (la vie), 503, 710
Saville, Victor, 212
Saving Private Ryan, 646
Saw, 656, 668
Sawdust and Tinsel (aka *The Naked Night*), 369
Saw horror series, 646
Sayles, John, 471, 672
Scalera company, 260
A Scanner Darkly, 700
Scanners, 656
The Scar, 569
Scarecrow, 573–574
Scarface (1932), 188, 204, 467
The Scarlet Letter, 138–139

The Scarlet Pimpernel, 211–212
Scarlet Street, 205
The Scar of Shame, 141–142
The Scavengers, 521
A Scene at the Sea, 623
Scenes from a Marriage, 369
Scenes from My Balcony, 13, 15
Scenes from Under Childhood, 442
The Scent of Green Papayas, 614
Schamus, James, 688
Schanelec, Angela, 556
Schatten (Warning Shadows), 88
Der Schatz ("The Treasure"), 88, 90, 98
Schenck, Joseph, 125
Schenck, Nicholas, 186
Schepisi, Fred, 610–611
Scherfig, Lone, 550, 687
Schillinger, Claudia, 536
Schlesinger, John, 400
Schlesinger, Leon, 208
Schlöndorff, Volker, 402, 509, 558
Schnedler-Sørensen, Eduard, 25
Schneemann, Carolee, 445
Schoedsack, Ernest B., 161
The Scholar's Breakfast, 39
School Daze, 663
School for Fathers, 353
Schrader, Paul, 458
Schroeter, Werner, 562
Schüfftan, Eugen, 253
Schuhpalast Pinkus ("Shoe Palace Pinkus"), 87
Schultz, Michael, 471
Schünzel, Reinhold, 240
Schwarzenegger, Arnold, 646
Sciamma, Céline, 559–560, 690
science fiction, 655–656, 664
Science Friction, 439
Scipione l' Africano, 242–243
Scola, Ettore, 549
Scorpio Rising, 445, 448, 541
Scorsese, Martin, 344, 373, 469–471, 672, 714
Scott, Ridley, 656, 663
Scott, Tony, 661, 709
Scream, 668
Screen Australia, 612
screwball comedy, 201–202
Scum, 546
Sealed with a Kiss, 629
The Searchers, 303–304
Searching for Sugarman, 521
The Seashell and the Clergyman, 84, 155
Season of the Sun, 412
Seastrom, Victor. *See* Sjöström, Victor
Sebastiane, 537
The Second Awakening of Christa Klages, 509, 558
The Second Circle, 575
The Secret, 629
Secret Cinema movement, 715
The Secret Garden, 532
Secret Honor, 461
The Secret in Their Eyes, 597
The Secret Life of Pets, 649, 658
The Secret of NIMH, 658
Secrets of a Soul, 98–99
Secret Sunshine, 633
Security Unlimited, 628
Sedgwick, Edward, Jr., 134
The Seduction of Mimi, 505
Seduction: The Cruel Woman, 536
The Seedling, 603
Se7en, 675, 710
Segel, Jakov, 350
Seif, Salah Abou, 476, 592
Seitz, Franz, 238
Self-Portrait, 446
Selick, Henry, 666
Selig company, 28, 30, 50, 65
Selma, 674
Selon Charlie, 557, 559
Selznick, David O., 186, 190, 200, 212, 295, 300
Sembene, Ousmane, 486–488, 490, 581, 583–584
Sen, Aparna, 604
Senegal, 581
Sen, Ivan, 612–613
Sen, Mrinal, 476, 603
Sennett, Mack, 57, 64–65, 134
Senso, 316–317, 322, 481
The Sentimental Bloke, 67
Senza pietà (Without Pity), 316
A Separation, 591
September, 462
Serena, 550
Serena, Gustavo, 48, 60
Serene Velocity, 527–528
Serfs, 357
Sergeant York, 192
serials, 50–51
Serpent's Path, 623
Serra, Albert, 564
Serreau, Colline, 557
Service, 617
Set It Off, 670
Seul Contre Tous (I Stand Alone), 566
Seven Arts, 454
Seven Beauties, 505
Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, 301
Seven Days, 530
Seven Days in May, 431, 457
Seven Footprints to Satan, 137
Seven Samurai, 346, 371–373
The Seventh Continent, 566
The Seventh Seal, 369, 370
7th Heaven, 139–140
79 Springtimes, 479
Seven Women, 456
The Seven-Year Itch, 304
Sevzapkino company, 106
Sex, 188
Sex and the Single Girl, 455
sex, *lies, and videotape,* 667–669, 673–674
Sexy Beast, 549
Shadow, 353, 637
Shadow of a Doubt, 200
Shadows, 472
Shadows and Fog, 462
Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors, 404, 493
Shaft, 471
The Shaggy D.A., 454
Shahani, Kumar, 603–604
Shake, Rattle & Rock!, 297
Shallow Grave, 552
The Shallows, 709
Shall We Dance?, 623
Shame, 369
Shamus O'Brien, 36
Shane, 300–301, 303, 469
Shanghai Blues, 629
Shanghai Express, 195
Shantaram, V., 359
Shaolin Soccer, 631, 639
The Shape of Water, 667
Shara, 623
Sharits, Paul, 528
Shattered, 92–93
Shaun of the Dead, 546, 686
The Shaun the Sheep Movie, 547
Shaw Brothers, 626–628, 636
Shaw, Run Run, 627
Shayamalan, M. Night, 656
Shchors, 232
She and He, 415
She Done Him Wrong, 188–189
Sheeler, Charles, 157
She Had Her Gun All Ready, 535
Shengelaya, Georgi, 492
Shen Xiling, 227
Shepitko, Larissa, 404, 573
She Puppet, 541
Sherlock Jr., 133–134
Sherman, Lowell, 188
She's Gotta Have It, 670–671, 676
She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, 303
Shi Hui, 357

Shi Jian, 520
Shimazu, Yasujiro, 217
Shimizu, Hiroshi, 218
Shine, 611
The Shining, 468
Shinkai, Makoto, 625
Shinoda, Masahiro, 414
Shintoho, 345
Shinya, Tsukamoto, 622
Shiomi, Mieko, 528
Shipman, Ernest, 67
Shipman, Nell, 67
The Ship Sails On, 374
Shiri, 631
Shivers, 471
Shoah, 516
Shochiku, 162–163, 182–183, 216–218, 221–222, 345, 621
Shoeshine, 316
Sholay, 602, 607
The Shooting of Dan McGoo, 208
Shoot the Piano Player, 388, 391
Shorin, A., 178
Short Cuts, 461, 659
A Short Film about Killing, 569
A Short Film about Love, 569
shot/reverse-shot technique, 39
Show Boat, 301
Showman, 428
Shrek, 645, 649, 658
Shrek 2, 653, 706
Shrek franchise, 646
Shrek the Third, 639
Shub, Esfir, 109, 162
Shui Hua, 357
Shukshin, Vasily, 402, 492
Shumyatsky, Boris, 121, 229–231
Shutter Island, 470
Siberiade, 572
Sicario, 685
Sicko, 523
Side Effects, 659
Side/Walk/Shuttle, 532
Siegel, Don, 308, 469
Siegfried, 88, 90, 92, 153
Sieranevada, 571
Sierck, Detlef, *see* Sirk, Douglas
Le Signe du lion, 392
La Signora di tutti ("Everybody's Lady"), 243
Signora senza camelie (The Lady without the Camelias), 316
Signs of Life, 560
Silba, Sebastián, 597
Silence, 470
The Silence (1963), 369
The Silence (1998), 590
Silence and Cry, 409
Le Silence de la mer ("The Silence of the Sea"), 335–336
Le Silence est d'or ("Silence Is Golden"), 331
The Silence of the Lambs, 646, 657
Silence . . . We're Rolling, 587
Silent Light, 599
Silent Running, 471
The Silent World, 421
Silverado, 662
Silver, Joan Micklin, 472
Silver, Joel, 653
Silver Linings Playbook, 656, 692
Silver, Marcel, 77
Simon of the Desert, 364
A Simple Case, 110
Simple Men, 670
Simpson, Don, 653
Sing, 658
Singer, Bryan, 674
Singh, Anant, 584
Singh, Tarsem, 663
The Singing Fool, 172, 175, 181
Singin' in the Rain, 301
Singleton, John, 662
Sinha, Mohan, 225
Siodmak, Robert, 205
Sippy, Ramesh, 602
Sir Arne's Treasure, 54
Sirius Remembered, 442
Sirk, Douglas, 240, 301, 445, 498, 509–510, 553, 555, 670
Sissako, Abderrahmane, 584
Sissoko, Cheick Omar, 584
Sisters, 458
Sisters in Law, 521
Sisters of Gion, 220–221
Sisters of Night, aka *Dark Habits,* 553
Sisters, or the Balance of Happiness, 559
Sita Sings the Blues, 706
Sivan, Santosh, 605
Les Six, 334
6½ × 11, 75
Six fois deux, 710
The Sixth Sense, 656, 658
Sjöberg, Alf, 338
Sjöman, Vilgot, 501
Sjöström, Victor, 44, 53–56, 129, 138, 337
Skeleton Dance, 207
The Skin I Live In, 553
Skladanowsky, Emil, 8
Skladanowsky, Max, 8
Die Sklavenkönigin (Moon of Israel), 166
Skolimowski, Jerzy, 405
Skoll, Jeff, 675
Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, 705
Skyfall, 694
The Skyscrapers, 33
Slacker, 673
slapstick comedy, 64–65
Slaughterhouse Five, 459
A Slave of Love, 493, 576
Sledgehammer, 547
Sleep, 446–447
Sleeper, 469
"sleepers", 652
Sleeping Beauty, 292
The Sleeping Car Murder, 504
Sleeping Dogs, 613
Sleepless in Seattle, 662
Slingshot, 617
SLON Group, 496
Slumdog Millionaire, 553
Slum Times Five, 416
The Small Back Room, 340
Smalley, Phillips, 64
Smash Palace, 613
Smiles of a Summer Night, 369
The Smiling Madame Beudet, 74, 76, 78–79, 83
Smith, Albert E., 18
Smith, Chris, 525
Smith, G. A., 16–17, 19, 20
Smith, Harry, 436, 439, 444
Smith, Jack, 445, 448
Smith, John, 530
Smith, Kevin, 674
Smurfs, 658
Snake Eyes, 708
Snake in the Eagle's Shadow, 628
Snowden, 663
Snow, Michael, 528–529, 531–532, 541
Snowpiercer, 568, 633
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 153, 207, 706
Snyder, Zack, 665
Socialist Realism, 228–236
The Social Network, 710
Société des Films Historiques, 73
Société des Réalisateurs ("Society of Film Directors"), 494
Société Française des Films Sonores Tobis, 180
Société Générale de Films, 149
Sociétés pour le financement de l' industrie cinématographique et audiovisuelle (SOFICAs), 547
Socrates, 323
Soderbergh, Steven, 666, 668, 702, 710
Sodom and Gomorrah, 166, 397

Soigne ta droite ("Keep Up Your Right"), 563
Sokurov, Aleksandr, 575, 577, 708
Solanas, Fernando, 483–484, 496, 596, 689
Solaris (1972), 492, 573
Solaris (2002), 666
Solás, Humberto, 479, 481–482, 601
Solax company, 28
Sole ("Sun"), 164, 244
Soleil O ("O Sun"), 488
Il Sole sorge ancora ("The Sun Always Rises"), 316
The Solitary Voice of a Man, 575
Solntseva, Yulia, 277
Solo: A Star Wars Story, 651, 719
Solomon, Phil, 532, 541, 718
Solondz, Todd, 672
Solovki Regime, 520
Solvyev, Sergei, 574
Somalia, 581
Some Interviews on Personal Matters, 572
Some Like It Hot, 294, 304–305
Some of Your Best Friends, 496
Something Different, 407–408, 491
Sonatine, 623
The Song of Ceylon (1934), 273
A Song of Ceylon (1985), 519
Song of Heroes, 268
Song of the Exile, 629
Songs, 442–443
Songs from the Second Floor, 566
Son nom de Venise dans Calcutta désert ("Her Name, Venice, in the Desert of Calcutta"), 559
Son of Man, 584
Son of Rambow, 547
Son of Saul, 570
Sono, Sion, 626
Sony Asia, 688
Sony Corporation, 593, 595, 621, 644, 646, 680, 683
Sony Pictures Animation, 658
Sony Pictures Classics, 646, 674
Sony Pictures Entertainment, 646, 648
Soponje, 631–632
The Sorrow and the Pity, 517
So That You Can Live, 517
So This Is Paris, 137
Soto, Helvio, 485
Souls on the Road, 163
sound, invention of, 170–179
sound editing, 662
The Sound of Music, 301, 453–454, 715
sound recording, improvements in, 191–192
Source Code, 655
La Souriante Madame Beudet (The Smiling Madame Beudet), 75
Sourraouina, 583
Sous le ciel de Paris ("Under the Skies of Paris"), 331
Sous le soleil de Satan, 551
Sous les toits de Paris (Under the Roofs of Paris), 180, 248, 255
South Africa, 581, 584
South Korea, 631–634, 685
South Pacific, 301
Soutter, Michel, 506
The Souvenir, 559
Souvenirs d'en France ("Memories of France"), 505
Soviet Montage movement, 101, 108–121, 148
Soviet Union. *See also* Russia
  censorship, 231, 350
  Cold War, 285
  Constructivism, 107–108
  documentary form in, 161–162
  early sound era in, 178–179
  New Economic Policy, 104–106
  1920s, 101–121
  non-Montage films, 119–120
  political cinema in, 492–493
  postwar era, 348–355
  Socialist Realism, 228–236
  Soviet Montage movement, 101, 108–121
  War Communism, 101–104
  wartime documentaries, 277
  World War II, 234–236
  Young Cinema and, 402–404
Sovkino company, 106–107, 110, 120
Soyuzkino, 110, 121
Sozosha company, 503
Spaak, Charles, 250, 255
Spaceballs, 655
Spain, 165, 325–326, 550
Spain, 269
Spanish Earth, 269
Spanking the Monkey, 670
Spare Time, 276
Sparrow (2008), 631
The Sparrow (1973), 587
Spartacus, 286, 296, 302
A Special Day, 549
Special Section, 504
Speck in the Water, 616
Speed Racer, 705
Spellbound, 190
The Spendthrift, 144
Spheeris, Penelope, 662
Spider Lilies, 620
Spider-Man, 650, 651, 652, 665
Spider-Man 3, 682
Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse, 709
The Spider's Stratagem, 505–506
Spielberg, Steven, 51, 367, 391, 457–458, 462–468, 473, 611, 646, 655, 658, 664, 682, 698–699, 705, 715, 717
Spione ("Spies"), 97
Spiral, 568
Spirited Away, 615, 625
Spirit of the Beehive, 550
Spiritual Boxer, 628
Split, 676
The Spooky Bunch, 629
Spring in a Small Town, 355–356
Spring in Budapest, 353
The Spring River Flows East, 355
Spring Silkworms, 226
Sproxton, David, 547
Spurlock, Morgan, 525
The Spy, 278
Spy Kids, 674
Spy Kids 2: The Island of Lost Dreams, 697
The Square, 588
The Squid and the Whale, 671
Stagecoach, 135, 197–198, 296
Stahl, John, 59, 188
Stalag 17, 304
Stalingrad, 277
Stalker, 573, 640
Stallone, Sylvester, 646
Stampfer, Simon, 4
Standard Operating Procedure, 524
Star!, 454
Star Athlete, 218
Star Cinema, 617
Stardust Memories, 462
Starewicz, Ladislas, 32, 281
A Star Is Born, 301, 303, 467
Stark Love, 136–137
The Stars Look Down, 214
Star Trek, 469, 649, 655
Star Wars, 51, 372, 454, 457, 462–463, 465–468, 471, 612, 629, 647, 649, 651, 655, 659, 665, 693–695, 698, 703, 717
Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace, 466, 697, 698
Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones, 704
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith, 703
Star Wars: The Force Awakens, 651
Star Wars: The Mandalorian, 651
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker, 694, 718
Star Wars Uncut, 695
State Legislature, 514

State of Siege, 504
Les Statues meurent aussi ("Statues Also Die"), 424
Staudte, Wolfgang, 311, 352
Stauffacher, Frank, 422, 432
Stazione termini ("Final Station"), 316
Steadicam, 457, 708
Steamboat Round the Bend, 197
Steamboat Willie, 143, 207
Steiner, Max, 192
Der steinerne Reiter ("The Stone Rider"), 88, 91
Steiner, Ralph, 157, 266, 270
Steinhoff, Hans, 238
Stella, 314
Stella Dallas, 198
The Step, 574
Stevens, George, 201, 303, 469
Stiller, Mauritz, 53–56, 97, 137–138, 337
Still Life, 638
Still the Water, 623
Still Walking, 626
The Sting, 458, 463
St. Michael Had a Cock, 506
Stolen Kisses, 391
Stoll company, 163
Stone, Oliver, 662– 663
Stone Reader, 525
Stop Making Sense, 513
Storck, Henri, 158–159, 268
The Store, 514
Stories of the Revolution, 479
Storm over Asia, 112, 114
The Story of Adele H., 391
The Story of a Mosquito, 31–32
The Story of Gösta Berling, 55–56, 137
Story of Tank Commander Nishizumi, 222
The Story of the Kelly Gang, 29
The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum, 221
The Story of Woo Viet, 629
La Strada ("The Road"), 316, 324, 374–375
Straight Shooting, 64, 303
Strand, Chick, 539
Strand, Paul, 157, 266, 269, 270
Strange Days, 719
Stranger on the Third Floor, 205
Strangers on a Train, 306
Stranger than Fiction, 674
Stranger Than Paradise, 667, 668, 673
Straub, Jean-Marie, 337, 379, 401–402, 412, 419, 507–509, 518, 536, 553, 564
A Stravinsky Portrait, 428
The Strawberry Statement, 456
Straw Dogs (1971), 456
Stray Dog, 371, 372
Stray Dogs (2004), 591
Stray Dogs (2013), 620
streaming, 526, 541, 585, 610, 641, 647, 651, 675–679, 691–692, 713–717, 720
The Street, 94, 97– 98, 148
Street Angel, 140
Street Angels, 226, 356
A Streetcar Named Desire, 305
Street of Shame, 347
Street without End, 217
Streisand, Barbra, 662
Strictly Ballroom, 611
Strike, 109–110, 112, 115, 118–119, 478
Strike Up the Band, 187, 198, 201
Strindberg, August, 337–338
Stromboli, 316
The Strong Man, 134
Strongman Ferdinand, 553
structural films, 526–537
The Structure of Crystals, 492
The Student of Prague, 44, 47
The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg, 137
StudioCanal, 546, 569, 653
Studio Ghibli, 625, 683
A Study in Choreography for Camera, 433–434
Sturges, Preston, 186, 200, 202, 663
Subarnarekha, 361
Subiela, Eliseo, 594
Subversives, 506
Subway, 561
Sücksdorff, Arne, 421
Sugarland Express, 457
Sujata, 359
Suleiman, Elia, 587
Sullivan, Pat, 143
Sully, 469
A Summer at Grandpa's, 619
Summer Interlude, 368–369
Summer Palace, 638
Summer with Monika, 368, 371, 390
Summit Entertainment, 646
Sumo Do, Sumo Don't, 623
The Sun, 575
The Sun Also Rises, 636
Sundance Film Festival, 472, 525, 673–674, 691
Sunday, Bloody Sunday, 504
Sunrise, 97, 139–140, 170
Sunset, 570
Sunset Blvd., 299, 304, 365
Sunset of a Clown, 370
Sunshine, 569
The Sun Shines Bright, 296
Sunshine State, 672
Suo, Masayuki, 623
superhero franchises, 650
Superman Returns, 650, 700
Superman series, 650
Superman: The Movie, 466–467
Super Size Me, 525
Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), 345
El Sur ("The South"), 550
Surfacing on the Thames, 528
Sur le passage de quelques personnes à travers une assez courte unité de temps ("On the Passage of a Few People through a Rather Brief Moment in Time"), 441
Surrealism, 155–156, 279–280, 364
Susana, 368
Susan Slept Here, 300
Suskind, Ron, 538
The Suspect, 205
The Suspended Step of the Stork, 554
Suspense, 64
Suzaku, 623
Suzhou River, 638
Suzuki, Seijun, 415, 624
Švankmajer, Jan, 526, 568
SVD, 110
Svenska Biografteatern, 53–54, 56, 149
Svensk Filmindustri, 53– 54, 56, 337
Swain, 439
Swallowtail Butterfly, 622
Sweden, 53–56, 336–338
Sweeney Todd, 656
Sweet Country, 613
Sweetie, 613
Sweet Movie, 503
Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song, 459
Swept Away, 505
Swickard, Charles, 65
Swimming Pool, 550
Swingers, 470, 670
Swing Time, 201
The Sword in the Stone, 454
Syberberg, Hans-Jürgen, 508, 562
Sylvester (New Year's Eve, St. Sylvester's Eve), 92–95
Sylvestre, 563
Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One, 513–514
Sympathy for Lady Vengeance, 633
Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance, 633
Symphonie pastorale, 329–330
Synchrony No. 2, 281
Syndromes and a Century, 615–616

Synecdoche, New York, 674
synergy, search for, 646–647, 650–65, 654, 681, 720
Syriana, 675
Szabó, István, 386, 412, 492, 505, 569
Szifron, Damián, 597

T

Tabio, Juan Carlos, 601
Tabloid, 524
Tabu, 139, 272
The Taebek Mountains, 632
Das Tagebuch einer Verlorenen (Diary of a Lost Girl), 98
Tager, P. T., 178
The Tailor from Torzhok, 119
Taipei Story, 619
Taiwan, 617–621
Taken, 657
Taken series, 686
Take Shelter, 671
Takeshis', 626
Take the Money and Run, 461, 469
Taking of Tiger Mountain 3D, 639
A Tale of Two Cities, 35
Tales from the Gimli Hospital, 533
The Tales of Hoffmann, 340
Tales of Lenin, 350
Talk to Her, 553
Tall Shadows of the Wind, 589
Tamahori, Lee, 613
T'amero sempre ("I Will Love You Always"), 243
The Taming of the Shrew, 363
Tampopo, 622
Tangerine, 707
Tangled, 651
Tango, 596
Tangos: Exile of Gardel, 596, 689
Tanner, Alain, 506
Tarahumara, 478
Tarang, 604
Tarantino, Quentin, 669, 675, 705, 710
Target for Tonight, 275–276
Tarich, Yuri, 120
Taris, 249
Tarkovsky, Andrei, 386, 402–404, 492–493, 561, 564, 572–575, 640, 666
Tarr, Bèla, 570
Tartüff (Tartuffe), 88, 92
Tarzan, 705
Tasaka, Tomotaka, 164, 222
Tashlin, Frank, 208, 301, 308
Taste of Cherry, 590
Tati, Jacques, 315, 366, 379–381, 556, 619
Tauris, 575
Tavernier, Bernard, 550
Taviani, Paolo and Vittorio, 549
La Tavola dei poveri, 244
Taxi (1998), 686
Taxi (2015), 591
Taxi Blues, 575
Taxidermia, 570
Taxi Driver, 460, 469–470
A Taxing Woman, 622
Taylor, Sam, 133
Taylor, William Desmond, 125
Tears of the Black Tiger, 615
Téchiné, André, 505, 561
Technicolor, 192–193, 288
Tedesco, Jean, 151
Teenage Hooker Became Killing Machine in Daehakroh, 632
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, 673
Televicine, 599
television, 421, 675–676
  and Aardman Animations, 547
  Australia, 610
  cable and satellite, 540, 587, 604–605, 644–645, 648, 683
  documentaries, 421–422, 471, 513, 522, 540–541
  European, 546
  Hollywood and, 292–293
  India, 605
The Tell-Tale Heart, 159–160
The Tempest, 302, 555
Le Tempestaire ("Master of the Winds"), 331
Temple, Shirley, 187
10, 701
Ten Canoes, 612
Tencent, 715
The Ten Commandments (1923), 128–130
The Ten Commandments (1956), 302
Ten Nights in a Barroom, 141–142
10,000 BC, 584
Teorema, 501
Terje Vigen, 55–56
The Terminator, 664
Terminator 2: Judgment Day, 664, 700
Terminator series, 639
Terra company, 237
Terra em transe ("Land in Anguish"), 417
La Terra trema ("The Earth Trembles"), 316–318, 322, 335, 396
La Terre, 74
The Terrorist, 605
The Terrorizers, 619
Terry, Paul, 143, 207
Terrytoons, 143
Teshigahara, Hiroshi, 414
Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse ("The Last Will of Dr. Mabuse"), 176
The Testament of Dr. Cordelier, 333
Tetsuo, 622
Texas Chainsaw Massacre, 471
Thailand, 615–616
Thais, 152
Thalberg, Irving, 124, 130, 186
Thanhouser company, 28
That Day, on the Beach, 619
That Obscure Object of Desire, 367–368
Le Théâtre de Petit Bob (Little Bob's Theater), 31
Their Finest, 550
Thème et variations, 157
The Theory of Everything, 686
There Is No Evil, 592
There's Something About Mary, 657
There Was a Father, 223
There Was a Lad, 402, 577
There Will Be Blood, 672
These Three, 198
They Live by Night, 307
They're a Weird Mob, 610
They Shall Not Grow Old, 707
They Shoot Horses, Don't They?, 459
They Were Expendable, 206
Thi, Coralie Trinh, 566
Thief, 663
The Thief, 299
The Thief of Bagdad, 132, 211
Thiele, Wilhelm, 177–178
Thigh Line Lyre Triangular, 442
Thimble Theater, 280
The Thin Blue Line, 520, 523–524, 541
The Thing, 302
Things to Come, 211
Things We Lost in the Fire, 550
The Thin Red Line, 672
The Third Generation, 552
The Third Man, 305, 340, 715
Thirst, 361
Thirteen Conversations about One Thing, 672
13 Rue Madeleine, 299
13th, 518
The 39 Steps, 212
37° 2 le matin (aka *Betty Blue*), 561
36 Chowringhee Lane, 604
36 Quai des orfèvres, 548
This Happy Breed, 215
This Is Cinerama, 288
This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous, 526
This Is Nollywood, 585
This Is Not a Film, 591, 707
This Is Spinal Tap, 513

This Sporting Life, 400
Thomas Graal's Best Child, 54
Thomas Graal's Best Film, 54
Thompson, Francis, 422
Thornton, Leslie, 534
Thornton, Warwick, 612–613
Thoroughly Modern Millie, 454
Thor: Ragnarok, 612, 614
A Thousand and One Hands, 581
The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse, 311
Thou Shalt Honor Thy Wife (aka *The Master of the House*), 149
Three, 408
3 Bad Men, 135
Three Daughters, 382–383
3D filmmaking, 292, 703–704, 707, 709
Three from the Filling Station, 177
300, 665
3-Iron, 633
Three Kings, 674
The Three Little Pigs, 207
Three Lives, 496
Three Monkeys, 589
The Three Musketeers (1921-1922), 72–73, 132
The Threepenny Opera, 176, 267, 498
Three Resurrected Drunkards, 500
Three Sisters, 558
three-strip Technicolor, 193
Three Women, 459
Thriller, 536
Throne of Blood, 372
Through a Glass Darkly, 369
Through the Olive Trees, 590
Throw Me a Dime, 362
Thugs with Dirty Mugs, 208
Thunderbolt, 136
Thursday's Children, 423
The 7th Voyage of Sinbad, 302
Tiananmen Square, 520
Tian Zhuangzhuang, 635–636
Ticket of No Return, 563
Tiefland, 241
tie-in deals, 653–654
Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!, 553
Tih Minh, 50, 73
Tillie's Punctured Romance, 132
'Til Madness Do Us Part, 521
Timbuktu, 584
Time and Tide, 532
Timecode, 700–701
A Time for Drunken Horses, 591
Time, Inc., 426
The Time Machine, 302
The Times of Harvey Milk, 517
The Time That Remains: Chronicle of a Present Absentee, 587
The Time to Live and the Time to Die, 619
Time Warner, 646–648, 650, 674
The Time We Killed, 537
The Tingler, 297
Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, 656
Tin Toy, 706
Tiny Furniture, 671, 676
Titanic, 605, 631, 637, 649, 652–653, 664–665, 681–682, 707
Titanus company, 241
Titicut Follies, 514
T-Men, 300
To Be or Not to Be, 197, 213
Tobis (Tonbild-Syndikat) company, 175, 181, 237
Tobis-Klangfilm, 175, 180, 183
To Die in Madrid, 422
Toei, 345, 621–622
Toho, 216, 218, 221–222, 345, 621–622
To, Johnnie, 630–631
To Kill a Man, 597–598
Tokyo-Ga, 561
Tokyo Olympiad, 422
Tokyo Sonata, 626
Tokyo Story, 347
Toland, Gregg, 159, 195
To Live, 636
Tolkien, J. R. R., 613
Tomboy, 559
Tom Jones, 400, 455
Tom, Tom the Piper's Son, 528, 533
Tongues Untied, 539–540
Toni, 254–255, 259
Toni Erdmann, 549
Tony Manero, 598
Too Beautiful for You, 550
Too Early, Too Late, 553
Toomelah, 612
Tootsie, 656, 658
To Parsifal, 441
Top Dog, 568
Top Gun, 645, 653
Topsy-Turvy, 551
Torgus, 90
Torment, 338
Toronto International Film Festival, 496, 598, 691–692
Torre Nilsson, Leopoldo, 363, 482
The Torrent, 137
"torture-porn" films, 656
To Sleep with Anger, 670
Total Balalaika Show, 513
Toto le héros ("Toto the Hero"), 548, 555
Touch of Evil, 305
A Touch of Sin, 638
A Touch of Zen, 627
Touchstone Pictures, 646
Touki-Bouki, 488, 584
Tourneur, Jacques, 203
Tourneur, Maurice, 63–64, 136, 689
Tous les matins du monde (All the Mornings of the World), 550
*Toute la mémoire du mond*e ("The World's Entire Memory"), 424
Toute une nuit ("All Night Long"), 557
Tout va bien ("Everything's Fine"), 499–500
Tower, 538, 707
The Towering Inferno, 454
A Town Called Tempest, 445
Town of Love, 164
Toyoda, Shiro, 222
Toy Story, 650, 658, 706
Toy Story 3, 707
Tractor Drivers, 234
Tractors, 534
Traffic (1971), 380
Traffic (2000), 666
Tragedy of the Street, 98
The Train, 457
Training Day, 670
Trainspotting, 552
Train to Busan, 634
Trainwreck, 657
Traité de bave et d'éternité (aka *Venom and Eternity*), 441
Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, 134
Transamerica Corporation, 454
Trans-Europe Express, 395
Transformers, 649, 682
Transformers series, 639
Transformers: The Last Knight, 602
Transit, 555, 586
Transporter series, 686
The Trap, 526
Trash, 526
Trauberg, Ilya, 110, 116
Trauberg, Leonid, 106, 109–110, 112, 119–120, 148, 178–179, 231
Trauner, Alexandre, 253, 255, 262
The Traveling Players, 502–503, 554
Treasure Island (1950), 293
Treasure Island (1993), 618
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, 307
The Tree of Life, 672
Tree of the Wooden Clogs, 549
Trenker, Luis, 240
Treno Popolare, 244
Tres tristes tigres (Three Sad Tigers), 484
Treut, Monika, 536
The Trial, 305
Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies under America, 534

Tri-Ergon, 175
Trilogy, 556
Trinh T. Minh-Ha, 519
Trintignant, Nadine, 504
Triple Agent, 550
A Trip to the Moon, 15, 19–20
Triste, 532
Triumph of the Will, 237–239, 241, 274
Trnka, Jiøí, 440
Les Trois masques ("The Three Masks"), 179–180
Trolls, 658
Trolls World Tour, 717
TRON, 699
TRON: Legacy, 709
Tropical Malady, 615
Le Trou ("The Hole"), 334
Trouble in Mind, 668
Trouble in Paradise, 191, 197
True Grit, 652, 663
True Heart Susie, 63
True Stories, 658
Truffaut, François, 366, 379, 386, 388–392, 394, 399, 405, 412–413, 459, 482, 494, 554, 561, 629
The Truman Show, 674
Trumbo, Dalton, 286
Trust, 670
Tsai Ming-liang, 620–621
Tscherkassky, Peter, 533
Tsotsi, 584
Tsuchimoto, Noriaki, 495
Tsui Hark, 629–631, 639
Tsukamoto, Shinya, 622
A Tub Named Desire, 445
Tucker: The Man and His Dream, 464
Tunisia, 581
The Turin Horse, 564
Turin, Viktor, 162
Turkey, 588–589
Turksib, 162
Turtles Can Fly, 591
Tusalava, 153, 281
12 Angry Men, 308
12 Days, 516
12:08 East of Bucharest, 571
12 Years a Slave, 668
20,000 Leagues under the Sea, 302
Twentieth Century, 195, 201–202
20th Century-Fox, 27, 57, 186–187, 197, 207, 274, 287–288, 290, 295–296, 301, 453, 463, 471, 576, 595, 612, 644, 645–646, 653, 675, 680–681. *See also* Fox Film Corporation
20th Century-Fox Animation, 658
21st Century Fox, 647–648, 651. *See also* Fox Film Corporation.
25 Fireman's Street, 505
25th Hour, 663
Twenty-Four Eyes, 348
24 Hour Psycho, 542
21 Grams, 600, 664, 673
23rd Psalm Branch, 443
Twice a Man, 441
Twilight franchise, 656
Twilight of the Gods, 322
Twilight of the Ice Nymphs, 533
The Twilight Saga, 646
Twin Peaks, 669
Twins' Tea Party, 14, 16
Twister, 466
Two, 408
Two Acres of Land, 359
Two Cars, One Night, 614
2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi Test ("2/60 48 Heads from the Szondi Test"), 437–438
Two Lane Blacktop, 459
Two Men and a Wardrobe, 405
Two Men in Manhattan, 336
Two or Three Things I Know about Her, 499
Two People, 337
Two Stage Sisters, 358
2046, 630
2000 Maniacs, 471
2001: A Space Odyssey, 459, 468, 492, 659, 698
2000 Seen By, 548
Two Years at Sea, 539
Tykwer, Tom, 555

U

UA. *See* United Artists (UA)
U-Carmen eKhayelitsha, 584
Uchida, Tomu, 218
Ufa. *See* Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft
Ufa-Film, 237
Ugetsu Monogatari ("A Tale of Ugetsu"), 346–347
Ukamau Group, 486
Ulee's Gold, 670
Ulmer, Edgar G., 190
El último malón ("The Last Indian Attack"), 67
Ultra Panavision 70, 288, 290
Ulysses, 322
Umberto D., 316–317, 319, 320, 322, 379, 396, 503, 600
The Umbrellas of Cherbourg, 393
Umut ("Hope"), 475, 588
The Unbelievable Truth, 673
Unbreakable, 656
Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives, 616
Uncle Moses, 190
Uncle Tom's Cabin, 20, 34
Uncut Gems, 675
Underexposed, 592
Underground (1928), 148–149
Underground (1976), 497
Underground (1995), 567
underground cinema, 444–449, 526, 536
Under the Sign of Scorpio, 506
Underworld (1927), 136, 204
Underworld USA, 302
Une Femme douce ("A Gentle Woman"), 377
Unfaithfully Yours, 202
Unfinished Piece for Player Piano, 577
The Unforgettable Year 1919, 349
Unforgiven, 469
Unifrance Film, 328
Union company, 87
L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa (LUCE), 164
Unione Cinematografica Italiana (UCI), 48, 164
Union Maids, 496, 497, 517
United 93, 686
United Artists (UA), 65, 125, 129, 131–132, 137, 159, 186, 189–190, 207, 211, 239, 287, 294, 296, 301, 400, 453, 454, 462–463, 644–646
United International Pictures, 648
United Nations, 310
United Productions of America (UPA), 292
United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc., 287
Universal, 27–28, 56–57, 96–97, 123–124, 129–130, 135, 139, 170, 186, 188, 192, 252, 279, 287, 296, 301, 305, 399, 453–455, 462–463, 596, 612–613, 621, 644–647, 657–658, 680, 682, 717
  Doris Day comedies, 455
  European directors at, 138–139
  films by Walter Lantz, 207
  horror films by, 202–203, 469
Universal Film Manufacturing Company, 56
Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft (Ufa), 85, 87–88, 94, 96–97, 99–100, 146–147, 149, 152–153, 175, 237, 261
The Unknown, 135
Unrelated, 559
Untold Scandal, 632
Up, 692, 704

Up series, 517
Upstream Color, 671
Up Tight, 447
Urban-Eclipse company, 28
Urgences ("Emergencies"), 516
Us, 656, 676
Uski Roti (A Day's Bread), 603
The Usual Suspects, 607, 670, 674
Utsab ("The Festival"), 607
Utu, 613

V

Vadim, Roger, 294
Vagabond, 557
The Vagabond, 65
Valerian and the City of Ten Thousand Planets, 686
Valkyrie, 653
Valley Girl, 662
Valparaiso mi amor ("Valparaiso My Love"), 484
Les Valseuses ("The Waltzers"), 550
Les Vampires, 50, 60
Vampyr, 150, 337, 433
VanDerBeek, Stan, 439, 444–446
van der Keuken, Johan, 537, 539
Van Dormaël, Jaco, 548, 555
Van Dyke, Willard, 270
Van Gogh (1948), 423
Van Gogh (1991), 551
The Vanishing Lady, 14
Vanity Fair, 30
Van Peebles, Melvin, 459
Van Sant, Gus, 662, 668–669
Vantage Point, 659
Varda, Agnès, 335, 393–395, 507, 557–558
Variations, 436
Variety, 94–95, 148
Variety Lights (Luci del varietà), 316, 324
Varlamov, Leonid, 277
Vasan, S. S., 359
Vasiliev, Georgy, 230
Vasiliev, Sergei, 230
Vecchia Guardia ("The Old Guard"), 242, 244
Velle, Gaston, 73
Velvet Tigress, 538
Venezuela, 183, 598, 601
Vengeance Is Mine, 622
Venice Film Festival, 225, 241–242, 272, 312, 325, 345, 354, 362, 402, 423, 425, 557, 598, 618, 621, 633, 690–692, 719
Venom, 639
Vera Cruz Studios, 362, 418
Vera Drake, 551
Vergano, Aldo, 316
La Verifica incerta ("Uncertain Verification"), 449
Der Verlorene (The Lost One), 310–311
Der verlorene Schatten ("The Lost Shadow"), 86
Vernon, Florida, 524
Veronika Voss, 552
vertical integration, 22–23, 57, 72, 123, 163, 186, 211, 213, 224–225, 683, 715
Vertigo, 306, 467, 638
Vertov, Dziga, 102, 106, 109–112, 117–118, 120, 159, 161–162, 178, 266, 351, 420–421, 430, 483, 485, 498–500, 513, 520, 526, 538
The Very Eye of Night, 434
A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas, 709
Vester, Paul, 538
VGIK, 350, 352, 402, 404
Viacom, 646, 681
ViacomCBS, 647
Via delle cinque lune ("Five Moon Street"), 244
Victimes de l'alcoolisme, 20
Victoria, 565, 708
Victory (1919), 64
Victory of Women, 347
Vidas secas ("Barren Lives"), 417
video, 540–541
video assist, 701
videocassette recorders, 644, 692
videocassettes, 644–645
video CD (VCD), 585, 692
Videodrome, 656
video games, 717–718
Video Home System (VHS), 644
video piracy, 692–693
Vidocq, 704
Vidor, Charles, 201, 278
Vidor, King, 127, 129–131, 142, 173–174, 198, 203, 244, 300, 303
Vie de bohème ("Bohemian Life"), 552
La vie de Jésus, 566
La Vie est à nous ("Life Belongs to Us"), 257, 259, 526
La Vie est belle (Life Is Beautiful), 582
"La vie telle qu'elle est" ("Life as It Is"), 51
Vietnam, 614–615
View from an Engine Front-Barnstaple, 16
Vieyra, Paulin, 486
Vigo, Jean, 249, 505
Village Roadshow Studios, 612, 653
Village Voice, 432
Vimeo, 541, 713
Vinterberg, Thomas, 687
Vinyl, 447
Violated Women in White, 415
Violence, 509
Violence at Noon, 413
Virginia Woolf, 457
The Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, 632
Viridiana, 326, 364, 367
virtual reality (VR), 718–719
Virtus WalkThrough Pro, 699
Visages d'enfants ("Children's Faces"), 75, 79
Visconti, Luchino, 245, 316–318, 322–323, 337, 396–397, 481
Les Visiteurs du soir ("Visitors of the Evening"), 253, 260–263
Vita futurista ("Futurist Life"), 152
Vitagraph, 18–19, 27–31, 34–35, 38–39, 45
Vitaphone, 170, 172, 175
Vitascope, 10, 17
Viva la muerte! ("Long Live Death!"), 501
Vive l'amour, 620
Vivement dimanche! ("Finally Sunday!"), 391
Vivendi company, 680
Vivere in pace ("To Live in Peace"), 316
Vivre sa vie, 389, 392, 498
Vixen, 471
La Vocation suspendu ("The Suspended Vocation"), 553
Vogel, Amos, 432
Volga-Volga, 233
Volkoff, Alexandre, 75–76
Vom Täter fehlt jede Spur ("No Trace of the Culprit"), 100
von Gerlach, Arthur, 88
Von Morgens bis Mitternacht (From Morn to Midnight), 88
von Praunheim, Rosa, 537
von Sternberg, Josef, 136, 177–178, 186, 195–197, 204
von Stroheim, Erich, 124–125, 129–130
von Trier, Lars, 539, 555, 563, 686–688. *See also* Dogme 95
von Trotta, Margarethe, 509, 557–559
von Woringen, Paul, 44, 47
Vorkapich, Slavko, 159
Voto + Fusil (The Vote and the Gun), 485
The Vow, 349
Le Voyage imaginaire ("The Imaginary Journey"), 73– 74
Voyage to Cythera, 554
Voyage to Italy, 316, 323– 324, 372, 405
Vufku company, 120

Vukotic, Dušan, 440
Vulcan Productions, 675

W

W., 663
Waati, 583
Wachowski, Lana, 665
Wachowski, Lilly, 665
Wachsmann, Daniel, 586
The Wages of Fear, 330
Wai Ka-fai, 630
Waiting Alone, 638
Waiting for Fidel, 519
Waiting to Exhale, 662
Waititi, Taika, 614
Wajda, Andrzej, 354–355, 388, 405, 492, 549, 568
Wakamitsu, Koji, 504
Waking Life, 700
Walden, 441
Walk Cheerfully, 219
Walking Tall, 471
Walkover, 386, 405, 406
The Wall, 588
Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, 547
Wallis, Hal, 296
A Wall of Silence, 520
Wall Street, 663
Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price, 525
Walsh, Raoul, 64, 124, 132, 136, 198, 206, 303, 456, 465
Walt Disney Animation Studios, 706
Walt Disney Company, 646, 648, 706, 716. *See also* Disney
Walt Disney Studios, 207, 292, 293
Waltz with Bashir, 538, 587
Wanda Studios, 640
The Wandering Earth, 639
Die Wandlung ("The Changing"), 89
Wang Bing, 521
Wanger, Walter, 190, 205
Wang Jianlin, 639–640, 685
Wang, Lulu, 670
Wang, Wayne, 670
Wang Xiaoshuai, 636
Wan, James, 674
War and Peace (1956), 302–303
War and Peace (1967), 404
The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya, 222
War Comes to America, 274
Warcraft, 681
Ward, Vincent, 613– 614
war film, 130–131, 206, 231
The War Game, 432, 708
Warhol, Andy, 421, 446–449, 503, 513, 526, 536, 673
Warner Bros., 27, 57, 124, 137, 143, 167, 169–172, 175, 186–187, 190, 192, 201, 203, 206, 208, 218, 286–287, 292, 295–296, 453–454, 467, 595, 600, 611–612, 621, 627, 637, 644–645, 650, 653, 674, 680, 713
Warner Communications, 646
Warner, Harry, 57, 137, 187
Warner Independent, 674
Warner, Jack, 57, 187
Warner, Sam, 57
War of the Worlds (2005), 646, 698–699, 708
The War of the Worlds (1953), 302
The Warrens of Virginia, 64
Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale, 621
The War Tapes, 522
wartime documentaries, 274–277
Warwick Trading Company, 16
Wasserman, Lew, 295–296, 463
Watchmen, 712
Water Sark, 536
Waters, John, 471– 472, 526
Waterworld, 652
Watkins, Peter, 432, 708
Watson, James Sibley, 159
Wat's Pig, 547
The Wave, 269–270
Wavelength, 528–529
Waxworks (Wachsfigurenkabinett), 88, 96, 139
Way Down East, 126, 128
The Way I Spent the End of the World, 571
Wayne's World, 662
The Way of the Dragon, 627
Wayward Cloud, 620
We All Loved Each Other So Much, 549
We Are the Elephant, 517
We Are the Guinea Pigs, 517
We Are the Lambeth Boys, 423
Webber, Melville, 159
Webb, Marc, 674
Weber, Lois, 64
Wedding, 492
The Wedding Banquet, 609, 620, 688
Wedding Crashers, 657
The Wedding March, 130
Weddings and Babies, 298
We Don't Live Here Anymore, 670
Weegee, 421
Weegee's New York, 421
Weekend, 499
Wee Willie Winkie, 197
We from Kronstadt, 231
Wegener, Paul, 47, 86, 88
Das Weib des Pharao ("The Pharaoh's Wife"), 94
Weinberg, Herman, 278
Weinstein, Bob, 673
The Weinstein Company, 596
Weinstein, Harvey, 673, 692
Weir, Peter, 610
Weisse Rosen ("White Roses"), 47
Welcome, Mr. Marshall, 325, 326
Welfare, 514
Welles, Orson, 187, 195, 197, 199–200, 221, 233, 305, 365, 467
Wellman, William, 131, 187, 196, 203, 204
Welsby, Chris, 530
Wenders, Wim, 376, 560–563, 573–574
Wendhausen, Fritz, 88
Wend Kuuni ("God's Gift"), 583
Wendy and Lucy, 670
We Need to Talk About Kevin, 559
Went the Day Well?, 214
Wenzler, Franz, 238
Werckmeister, Hans, 88, 90
Werckmeister Harmonies, 570
Wertmuller, Lina, 505, 557
Western Electric, 170–171, 179, 181–182
Western Europe, 545–566
Westfront 1918, 176
West Germany, 310–311, 507–510
West Indies, 583
West of the Tracks, 521
West Side Story, 301, 453
Weta Digital, 614
Weta Workshop, 708
We Were Like This Yesterday, How Is It Today?, 616
Wexler, Haskell, 459, 497
Whale, James, 203
Whale Rider, 614
What Did the Lady Forget?, 219
What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?, 303
What Have I Done to Deserve This?, 553
What's Happening! The Beatles in New York, 428
What's Opera, Doc?, 292
What's Up, Doc?, 458
What We Do in the Shadows, 614
When Harry Met Sally, 656
When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts, 663
When the Mountains Tremble, 517
When the Pie Was Opened, 281
When Worlds Collide, 302
Where Am I?, 143
Where Chimneys Are Seen, 346–347
Where Is the Friend's Home?, 590

Where to Invade Next, 523
Whiplash, 671
Whisky Galore! (aka *Tight Little Island*), 341
Whispering Pages, 575
Whitaker, Forest, 662
White, 569
The White Balloon, 590–591
White Bird with a Black Mark, 492
White Christmas, 288
The White Eagle, 120
White Heat, 303
White Material, 559
The White Meadows, 591
The White Sheik, 316
The White Sun of the Desert, 572
Whitney, James, 432, 436
Whitney, John, 432, 436
Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, 465, 650, 665
The Whole Town's Talking, 189
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, 456
Why Change Your Wife?, 128–129
Widerberg, Bo, 504
Wieland, Joyce, 507, 534, 536
Wiene, Robert, 88, 90–91, 96, 146
Wife, Be Like a Rose!, 217–218
Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself, 550
Wilcox, Graham, 146
Wilcox, Herbert, 210
Wild Boys of the Road, 203
The Wild Bunch, 456
Wild Bunch agency, 692
The Wild Child, 391
Wilder, Billy, 200, 205–206, 237, 251, 294, 304, 365
Wilde, Ted, 133
Wild in the Streets, 471
The Wild Pear Tree, 589
Wild Strawberries, 314, 369
Wild Tales, 597
Wild Things (1998), 659
Williamson, James, 16–17, 19–20
Williams, Paul, 459
Willow, 465
Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?, 308
Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn, 67–68
Winchester 73, 296
The Wind, 138
The Wind and the Lion, 467
Wind from the East, 499
The Wind Journey, 598
Window Water Baby Moving, 442
The Wind Rises, 625
The Winds of the Aures, 581
The Wind That Shakes the Barley, 551
The Wind Will Carry Us, 590–591
Wine of Youth, 130
Winged Migration, 525
Wings (1927), 131–132
Wings (1966), 404
Wings of a Serf, 120
Wings of Desire (Himmel über Berlin), 561
Winterbottom, Michael, 566
Winter Light, 369
Winter Soldier, 495
Winter Sounds, 589
Wiseman, Frederick, 514–515, 521
Wise, Robert, 203
The Wishing Ring, 63
The Witch, 676
Witchcraft through the Ages, 53, 149
With Babies and Banners, 496–497, 517
Witness, 521
Witness for the Prosecution, 304
The Wizard of Oz, 192–193, 195, 201, 301, 465, 541
The Wobblies, 517
Wohl, Ira, 514
Wolf Creek, 612
The Wolf of Wall Street, 470
Wolf Warrior II, 640
Wollen, Peter, 536
Wolman, Dan, 586
The Wolverine, 612
Woman in the Dunes, 414
Woman in the Window, 205
A Woman Is a Woman, 391
A Woman of Paris, 125, 132–133, 137, 303
Woman of the Mist, 217
Woman of Tokyo, 219
The Woman's Film, 496
A Woman Under the Influence, 472
Woman Who Touched the Legs, 163
Womb, 570
Women of the Night, 347
Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, 553
The Wonder Ring, 442
Wonder Woman, 639, 662
Wong Kar-wai, 630–631, 640, 685
Wood, Edward D., 297
Woodstock, 513
Woo, John, 629–631, 637, 681, 717
Word Is Out, 497
Wordplay, 525
Workers Leaving the Factory, 9
Workers Newsreel Unemployment Special, 266
Workers of All Lands, Unite!, 103
Working Girls, 668
Working Title company, 686, 688
The World, 638
The World of Apu, 382
The World's Fastest Indian, 614
World without Sun, 421
Worshippers Leaving the Noon Mass at Pilar de Zaragoza, 21
Worsley, Wallace, 135
Wreck-It Ralph series, 650, 706
Wright, Basil, 273, 519
Wright, Joe, 661
A Wrinkle in Time, 674
Written on the Wind, 301
WR: Mysteries of the Organism, 491, 501
The Wrong Man, 306
The Wrong Move, 561
The Wrong Trousers, 547
Wuthering Heights, 190, 198
Wu Tianming, 635–636
Wu Yonggang, 226
Wyler, William, 190, 198, 204, 274–275, 296, 302–303, 365, 382, 456, 467

X

Xala ("The Curse of Impotence"), 487
Xi'an Film Studio, 235, 635–636
Xiao Wu, 638
Xia Yan, 226
Xie Jin, 357–358, 489
Xinhua company, 226
X-Men, 651, 660

Y

The Yacoubian Building, 587–588
Yamada, Yoji, 624
Yamamoto, Kajiro, 222–223
Yamamoto, Masashi, 535
Yamanaka, Sadao, 216–217
Yang, Edward, 618–620, 638, 685, 691
Yang Gong, 356
Yang Yanjin, 634–635
Yankee company, 34
Yanki, No!, 427
The Year of Living Dangerously, 610
Yeelen (Brightness, aka *The Light),* 583
Yellow Earth, 635–636
Yellowing, 521
Yellow Submarine, 456
Yermoliev company, 49, 75–76, 102–103
Yes, 536
Yesterday Girl (Abschied von Gestern), 401–402, 507
Yiddish films, 190
Yiddish Talking Pictures, 190
Yihua company, 226
Yi Yi, 620
Yojimbo ("Bodyguard"), 371–372

Yol (The Way), 588–589
Yonggang, Wu, 226
Yoshida, Kiju, 622
Yoshida, Yoshishige, 414
Yoshimura, Kimisaburo, 222
You Can Count on Me, 670
You Can't Take It with You, 201–202
You Le, 638
young cinema. *See* new cinema trends
Young Frankenstein, 469
Young Guard, 349–350
Young, Harold, 211
Young-joo Byun, 520
Young Master, 628
Young Mr. Lincoln, 197
The Young Rebel, 479
Young Sherlock Holmes, 700
The Young Stranger, 308
Young Törless, 402
You Only Live Once, 200
You Ought to Be in Pictures, 208
You're a Big Boy Now, 464
Your Name, 625
youth comedy, 656
You, the Living, 566
YouTube, 11, 526, 541, 647, 652, 675, 677, 698, 713, 716
You've Got Mail, 656
You Were Never Really Here, 559
Y Tu Mamá También, 593, 599, 667, 681
Yuan Muzhi, 226, 356
Yufit, Evgeny, 536
Yugoslavia, 351–352, 408, 440
Yutkevich, Sergei, 109–110, 178
Yuva ("The Youth"), 606

Z

Z, 504
Zabriskie Point, 375, 459, 506
Zagreb studio, 440
Zama, 597
Zampa, Luigi, 316
Zanuck, Darryl F., 187, 296, 463
Zanuck, Richard F., 462
Zanussi, Krzysztof, 492, 568
Zarkhi, Alexander, 231
Zatoichi series, 413, 626
Zavattini, Cesare, 245, 316, 318, 420, 479
Zazie dans le métro, 393
Zecca, Ferdinand, 13, 15, 23
Zeffirelli, Franco, 323
Zelig, 462
Zeman, Karel, 440
Zemeckis, Robert, 665
Zen for Film, 446
Zentropa company, 688
Zero Dark Thirty, 675, 709
Zero for Conduct, 249, 252, 255, 505
Zhang Yimou, 635–637
Zhang Yuan, 636
Zhao Ming, 356
Zhelyabuzhsky, Yuri, 105
Zheng Junli, 355–356
Zinnemann, Fred, 269, 287
Zodiac, 705, 710
Zoetrope, 4
Zoetrope Studios, 464, 466
Zonca, Erick, 551
Zoo, 514
Zootopia, 649, 651
Zorba the Greek, 455
Zorns Lemma, 529, 535, 542
Zoya, 235
Zucker, David, 469, 656
Zucker, Jerry, 469, 656
Zukor, Adolph, 27, 30, 57, 123
Zu neuen Ufern ("Toward New Shores"), 240
Zur Chronik von Grieshuus (The Chronicle of the Grey House), 88
Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain, 629
Zvenigora, 110–112
Zvyagintsev, Andrey, 577
Zwigoff, Terry, 525

Mc Graw Hill Education
5011333